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COMIC BOOK MARKETPLACE

No. 25 • July 1995
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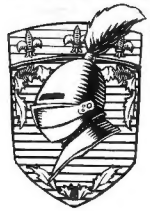

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ON THE COVER:
She's stunning! She's sexy! She's the most controversial crime fighter of the '40s!

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A Most Painful Survey!

Several fellow collectors and friends have been chastising me lately regarding the *CBM Five Fave Covers Survey* we've been conducting these past few months. Their common complaint; "I can't pick just five! I'm having trouble narrowing my favorite covers list down to 100, much less just five! Your survey is more sadistic than a Schomburg torture cover! Let's see YOU pick your five favorite covers!"

So I took up the challenge and began the process. At first I thought "This can't be that tough! I'll just list all the covers I really like and narrow it down from there."

My initial list had over 100 covers on it, and I hadn't even looked through Gerber yet. After nearly a week I was able to whittle my list down to 17... and that's when the headaches, indigestion, and overall depression set in.

"I just can't leave a single one of these great covers off my list! What will my friends think? What will CBM readers think? What will I think? Geeeeze... why'd I ever think that anyone could narrow it down to just five all-time favorite covers? I must have been crazy!"

Nope. I've got to do it! If for no other reason than to keep Steve Gentner and Bill Howard from saying, "See, I told you it's impossible!"

So after two more sleepless nights of anguish, soul searching, and head pain, I finally narrowed my list to five. So without further justification, apology, or adieu, here are my picks... and believe you me, it wasn't easy!

Showcase #34 – Genius - brilliant - color - composition - For me it is THE quintessential Silver Age DC cover and still gives me that wonderful "rush" of nostalgia and excitement every time I see it!!

More Fun Comics #61 – The second Dr. Fate cover and I feel one of the most beautiful, colorful, and perfectly composed covers of the Golden Age. It's also got everything... sci-fi, fantasy, mystery, a green alien, and an incredible costumed hero... all on a very rare book!

Startling Comics #49 – My long-time friend and fellow collector Pat Calhoun first introduced me to this phenomenal work... a robot sci-fi cover by the great Alex Schomburg with a great concept that almost never occurs in comics. Namely a robot wading into the enemy of all electronic and mechanical gear... water! Plus carrying a beautiful damsel to boot! But further, we don't know if the robot is a hero rescuing the girl or a villain kidnapping her! I now list *Startling* #49 among the all-time classics.

Green Lantern #8 (Silver Age) – A gila monster as an alien from the far distant future? Zowie! What a sure-fire way to get a 10 year old to buy (and fall in love with) a comic. And to top it all off it's a "grey tone" piece to boot! Awesome... like totally awesome!

Strange Adventures #10 – I know everyone usually picks *Strange Adventures* # 9, but the giant green alien bursting out of the glass is really high impact and a true "bug-eyed monster classic" of the early fifties, and I feel the best of the run.

So there, Steve and Bill, I've done it... and with only moderate hair loss! As for you dear reader... the next time some editor asks you to pick your five favorite covers of all time, just say "no thank you... I'm having more fun removing my own appendix with a rusty razor blade!"

Gary

Gary M. Carter

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EDITOR
Gary M.Carter

ART DIRECTOR
Lisa M.Carter

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Pat Calhoun

ADVERTISING DIRECTOR
Michael Naiman

COPY EDITOR
Beth Holley

EDITORIAL ASSOCIATES
Betty McChesney
Mick Rabin

PRODUCTION ASSOCIATE
Skeeter McMurtry

SUBSCRIPTION MANAGER
Susan Naiman

DESIGN CONSULTANT
Joe Sikoryak

MAGAZINE CONSULTANT
Bill Howard

TECHNICAL CONSULTANT
Mark Yturralde

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS AND ARTISTS

Michael Allen • Jon Berk
Pat S. Calhoun • Joe Casaro
Duane Dimock • Keif Fromm
Jeff Gelb • Stephen Gentner
Dave Grisez • Roger Hill • Jim Korkis
Andy Lee • Jack Mallette
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How About It Keith?

In response to Keith Contarino's letter in your last issue, if he's got truly NM copies of Daredevil 31-40, Avengers 27-40, or Spider-Man 60-70, I would be more than happy to take them off his hands at the current Guide prices.

Maybe the supply of these books is plentiful in his neck of the woods, but not here in the San Francisco bay area. Like many dealers, I believe Keith is under the mistaken impression that demand begins and ends with his customer list. One only need look at the sharp-elbowed activity at a true national show like San Diego to get an accurate sense of the demand of even late 60's Silver Age material in high grade.

How about it Keith. Got any books to sell? Gary, each issue of Comic Book Marketplace gets better and better. It's the only true refuge for Silver and Golden Age comic junkies like me. My congratulation to you, Lisa, and the entire staff of CBM. Best personal regards.

Bill Howard, California

Good Natured Kidding

Congratulations on the return of CBM. The upgrades to glossy paper and interior color really enhance the magazine's appearance; it's a first-class product. Even though my collecting focus is relatively narrow (DC Silver-present), I read CBM from cover to cover. Every article conveys a joyous enthusiasm for the material that can simply not be found elsewhere. Please consider my subscription check as a vote of sincere appreciation and confidence.

It was especially rewarding to read Alan Bahr's article on the DC 100 Page Super Spectaculars (CBM #22). I was subjected to a lot of good-natured kidding from my friends when I purchased a copy of #5 at the 1993 Mid-Ohio Con. It was great to be able to show them this article!

Tom Hamilton, Ohio

Depth and Breadth

Tell Michelle Nolan for me that her regular feature is my favorite. The depth and breadth of information that she packs into each one is amazing. Her stuff, like every CBM will be an ongoing resource for years to come! I must also comment that Pat Calhoun's writing is quite interesting and I like the focus on material that I wouldn't ordinarily find in my local area. Best wishes for continued issues of CBM!

Eileen Agnew-Mason, New Jersey

King Comments

Glad you are back. Thanks for finally setting the record straight on Spidey 14. It is common in high grade and needs to sit for a while until its value catches up with its price. How bout a similar study of early FF's? I remember at one time you were trying to estimate the number of FF 2's around... now there is an uncommon book. Those 1962 Marvels are really hard to find. Take a look at pre-hero (my favorite). I think they have pretty much doubled in the last 2 years.

Anyway, the real reason for this rambling letter... please tell Joe Cesaro that the entire run of Star Trek the Animated series has been available for years on laser disc. It's a boxed set, and from what I remember, pretty much set the standard. I don't have time to dig out the review from my old Laser Disc Newsletters, but when I do, I'll send it along. I do not own it, but it is in stock at Media Play here in Atlanta. Considering the tone of Joe's article, this is a big omission and I feel Paramount deserves an apology. They did it right from the start by packaging the entire run in the best format around.

Now if we can just get our favorite comics on CD ROM without the terrible Marvel "new" coloring they use in the Masterworks (but that's a topic for another day).

Mark King, Georgia

Ingersoll's Silver Memories

It's great to have the original Comic Book Marketplace back. The Overstreet quarterly just wasn't the same. I enjoyed all of the articles in issue #23, but feel I must comment on one, Steven Gentner's "Silver Memories of the Scarlet Speedster".

I agree that Carmine Infantino's Flash was a great strip (as was his Adam Strange series), but Steven's (and my) enjoyment should properly be credited to writer John Broome not Gardner Fox. It's true that Fox was, at least indirectly, responsible for the Flash since he created the Golden Age version. And he did write many Flash scripts, but not nearly as many as Broome. During Infantino's initial run on the Flash strip, he returned as artist with issue #296 and, continued until the end of the run in #350.

Broome wrote 82 stories (plus 4 in Showcase), Fox wrote 32, and Bob Kanigher wrote 1 (plus 4 including the origin in Showcase). Broome wrote all of the first appearances for every major character and villain except Flash and Iris. In particular, Broome wrote all of the stories that Steven mentions with the exception of his fifth choice, "The Flash of Two Worlds". Fox wrote that one and all the other team-ups with the Golden Age Flash.

Fox's first Flash story was "The Madcap Inventors of Central City" in Flash #117. This was the first (and only) appearance of the Silver Age version of the three Dimwits. Fox didn't become a regular writer for Flash until 1964. This was when Schwartz gave up Mystery in Space and Strange Adventures to take on Batman and Detective. Since Broome took on much of the Batman writing, Fox was needed on Flash. After issue #142, Fox wrote a slight majority of the Flash tales.

My own list of five favorite Flash stories is also heavily dominated by Broome. It is: They are: "The Flash of Two Worlds", "Danger in the Air" (the first appearance of the Trickster), "Man who Stole Central City" (a wonderful gimmick and thought-provoking look at causality), "Secret of the Three Super-Weapons" (I just loved Kid Flash's new uniform and wish Wally was still wearing it), and "Invasion of the Cloud Creatures" (the first Flash story I read).

Jon Ingersoll, Connecticut

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Young Heroes

Congratulations on the return of the most enjoyable comic publication on the market today. I just picked up issue #23 only to find that I missed the initial return with issue #22. Most of the comic stores in the immediate area are only carrying the monthly 'hype' magazines of the current market. Keep up the great work you're doing.

Oh yeah... how about some articles on obscure young heroes; Boy Heroes in All New Comics, Jr. Rangers in Headline Comics, Commando Cubs in 'Thrilling Comics', Boy Explorers, and 'Boy Commandos'. Also, maybe an article about strange cross-genre books; Cowgirl Romances #1-12, Green Lantern #33, Modern Comics #99, Target Western Romance, etc. Food for thought.

Chris S. Winiger, Washington

You write it...I'll publish it!

Apparent Grades

In response to your letter on apparent grades, I've been a collector for a number of years. I started collecting in the mid to late 50's. I've always bought comics because I love comics. I always bought a certain book because that's the comic I wanted.

In the old days if you went to a bookstore to buy used comics ... you bought the comic you wanted, no matter the shape. If it was GD, that was great; if it was FN, that was great. If it happened to be in NM, then that was a bonus.

I still collect the same way. Most of the books I buy are GD to VG. It costs me a lot less, and I still get the thrill of owning a "cool" book. So when you ask about all the grades and the "looks like", "apparent", etc.... the bottom line is, if you want to own that book, buy it.

Everyone wants their collection to be worth a million. I want to have a great collection I can enjoy. So in closing I say if the books have "looks like", or "apparent", it was probably done to make more money! So I'd rather have a V6. Thanks for the ear...

Rod Matlack, Colorado

Point well taken, Rod. I like high grade stuff like anybody, but I've got a few V6s (even V4s) in my collection, and some of them are among my favorite books.

CBM Index?

Congratulations on reviving a wonderful magazine. I look forward to receiving each issue with great anticipation for the wealth of knowledge that it contains. I have one suggestion. I am sure that I am not alone in looking at Comic Book Marketplace as a reference work. It would be helpful if you could include an index of articles that have appeared in previous issues, so when there is a feature that I need to look up I don't have to thumb through

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several back issues. You might also include pieces that have appeared in issues #1-6 of Overstreet's Gold and Silver quarterly. Thanks again, and I can't wait for future issues, especially the one that showcases The Witness.

Sid Friedfertig, New York

Good suggestion, Sid. We've got something in the works right now that will be published in an upcoming issue..

Marketplace Reports

The new publication is certainly wonderful. I must say my favorite part is the Marketplace Reports. They're not only interesting but what a great educator for someone interested in pursuing old issues. Anyway, hope you continue to expand that section in the new publication. Thanks,

Lloyd Duff, Nevada

Man Oh Man!

Man oh man! That's all I can say. I've been looking for a magazine like yours for a long time. But I'm not writing just to praise you, although I'm sure you appreciate it. What I'm wondering is:

(1) Are there any articles on Edgar Church and his amazing collection? I have only been able to find CBM since it's become a Gemstone publication. To me it seems like such an obvious choice for an article. Who this man was and what possessed him to amass such a collection. It's incredible, but I actually have trouble sleeping at night thinking of all those comics in the possession of one man.

(2) I can't afford to collect original Golden Age books, but I buy all the DC reprints and especially love the All-Star series. Do you know if DC is still planning to publish the entire line of All-Star? It's been a long time since the second volume came out, my inquiries at DC have never been answered.

(3) Also would you know of any reprint series that deal with Golden Age material? Timely, DC, Fawcett, etc.? I wish I could afford the real thing, but an independent film maker just doesn't have that kind of money. Especially if he lives in Canada and has to convert his money into American.

I really would appreciate any help that you could give me. Once again let me assure you that your articles keep me reading far too long into the night. In fact they keep me away from my computer and that script that I have to finish. Thanks...

Francis Litzinger, Ontario, Canada

(1) Dr. Patrick M. Kochanek's 4 part discussion of the Mile High Collection was published in the original CBM issues #2-5 and of course there is Ernest Gerber's interesting article in his Photo-Journal Guide.
(2) I contacted DC myself and the person I spoke with did not know the answer to your All-Star question. I hope they eventually reprint every DC Golden Age book! It would be a researchers dream come true!
(3) There are several out there, my favorites right now are Bill Black's reprints of Phantom Lady and Russ Cochran's excellent full color EC reprints. (I know they're not GA but they are wonderful and deserve a mention.). There are also some excellent books (standards really) including The Great Comic Book Heroes by Jules Feiffer published in 1965. I suggest looking in your library or checking with your local comic shop, I'll just bet they know of plenty of great reprints... and maybe some enterprising CBM reader will write in an educate both of us with a list of GA reprints.

I Miss The Doc

I believe that the CBM is the best written publication about the Comic Book Market. I hope you present more articles on preservation, storage, and restoration, plus articles on pedigree comics and the scarcity of Golden Age DC. I miss the articles by Dr. Kochanek! Thank you,

Erik Rader, California

I miss 'em too!

Very Impressed

Picked up issue #22 at a local dealer and was very impressed. This is exactly what Golden Age collectors need; intelligent articles, good illustrations, and a focus on some of the lesser known characters and publishers. Keep up the good work. Here's wishing you every success and a long run of this and hopefully other publications focusing on the Golden Age of comics.

Jerry Eiff, Wisconsin

Arrival Dates

Great to see the story and history of Mr. Frank Blankis of Salida, Colorado and his collection found by Bruce Ellsworth in the recently discontinued Quarterly. I know Mr. Ellsworth and was fortunate enough to purchase some of the nicest war books you'll ever see. My limited budget didn't allow me to buy any keys, or the huge stacks that Bruce was sending to other loyal customers, but the ones I did get were near-perfect copies (with beautiful white pages) of my favorite DC War titles. The black cover of G.I. Combat #131 (showing a surrounded, battered "Haunted Tank") is pure perfection. Star Spangled War Stories #59 is another example. Again the spine, covers, staples, pages, etc. of this book is NM throughout.

Which brings me to the point of this letter. In response to your comments in Quarterly No. 6 about an arrival date being stamped somewhere on the front cover, and how it doesn't allow the grade to be better than VF. This book does have a very neat date stamped above the underwater frogman's head, and believe me in no way does it subtract from the near perfect condition of this book.

Please reconsider this grading criteria/practice. If a fantastic looking book is really NM, you'll know it. The small arrival date stamped on the cover will only help reinforce the age of the treasure you have. (Nice books from a special collection like this one, or from any collection shouldn't have their uniqueness lowered because of arrival dates. But again, a book's grade belongs to that book not the collection it came from...)

L. Thomas, Arizona

I've carefully considered your suggestion

continued on page 76

Just the Facts.

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52 Suspense-Packed Pages!

The biggest Atlas fantasy title is *Suspense,* because it was the only one to appear in the older style 52-page format (as opposed to the new style 36-page format). The first eight issues of *Suspense* (December, 1949 through May, 1951) were oversized. While this was unique among the rapidly-expanding Atlas fantasy line, it is even stranger when you consider that, after "slimming down" for issues #9-16, they swelled back up again for #17-23 (April, 1952 through October, 1952)! This is but one more quirk that students of the Timely-Atlas-Marvel publishing empire can add to the charming history of the original "house of ideas".

Focusing on the latter (#17-23) group of 52-pagers, it must be said that there seems to be a fair amount of "filler" in the extra stories, but still each issue (of the three we'll examine here), yields at least a fair amount of memorable material from the leading purveyor of pre-Code fantasy comics. The *Suspense* title was inspired by the CBS radio and television program "Suspense" which specialized in acting out mystery, fantasy, and twist-ending melodramas on the air. Early issues acknowledged this relationship on the cover; the last one to do so was #11 (November, 1951), which was also the first issue to carry the Atlas globe emblem.

Suspense #18 (May, 1952) starts off well with a nicely-staged nightmarish cover by the talented Joe Maneely. "The Cozy Coffin" leads off inside, also rendered by Maneely. It's a not-quite-logical, but enjoyable, tale of a rich old man, who likes to sleep in his coffin, and his no-good nephew, who's playing Mr. Nice Guy, while praying for the old man to die so he can inherit the estate. But when uncle buys him a coffin and asks him to sleep in it "to show his love" you know the general direction things are going. "The Joke" is a so-so yarn of just desserts for a greedy fool... most notable for early art by Jay Scott Pike, in a handsomely simple yet detailed style.

"Creep, Hands, Creep" is a nifty and nasty piece of work illustrated by old pro George Roussos. In it, the hands of a slick pickpocket-turned-murderer live on after his death in the electric chair. After an utterly predictable crime story and a pointless exercise in super-powered villainy, two first-rate tales round out the book. "Stay Away" is a well-done version of the "archeologist trapped in a tomb" plot made vivid by Bernie Krigstein's extraordinary art. "The River" is a "murderer on the lam" story, the kind where the killers think they're escaping as they head straight towards grim and imaginative death traps. This one also has the distinctive drawing of Manny Stallman going for it.

That's seven stories... a lot of fantasy for a dime... with five of them judged worthwhile, plus the cool Maneely cover, *Suspense* #18 is a definite winner.

Suspense #19 (June, 1952) features a mysterious grave-digging scene by Russ Heath on the cover. It's not representative of any story inside, but certainly captures the tone of the magazine. "Birdface" is an ironic fable about the disappointments due to those who wait for a miracle to transform their lives. Next, "The Tough Guy" is proletarian social commentary subtitled "a tale of brutal suspense". Bill Everett does a good job drawing all the disgruntled workers' faces as they revolt against their abusive boss. A forgettable psychic time travel tale is followed by "Second Chance", an amusing "deal with the Devil" where the hapless mortal protagonist's wish to change the past is granted, only instead of

"MAY I BE THE FIRST... to congratulate you, Professor Trask... on the amazing success... of formula nineteen!"

BY PAT S. CALHOUN

SUSPENSE #18 (May 1952) Another young couple enters the world of Atlas horror on this Joe Maneely cover (below left).

getting better, his past "becomes" much worse.

After a grade-C vampire story, "The Growing Terror" wraps things up- literally. A man who talks to plants ends up as the betrayer of the human race when the growth formula he prepares at the plants' bidding enables them to spread across the world in a green mass. Fred Kida drew this epic of vegetative vengeance.

SUSPENSE SANCTUARY

Greetings, Suspense fans. You've all been swamping us with letters, since we invited you to send them in for this page. We've had a hard time keeping up with the flood — so don't be too disappointed if yours isn't printed here. We're trying to print as many as we have room for.

Now draw in closer and join the huddle. We're all friends here. Just don't be too surprised if your right-hand neighbor turns out to be a ghoul, or a vampire. . . .

SUSPENSE #22 (Sep 1952) The living and the dead are at close quarters on this wild Bill Everett cover (below center).

SUSPENSE #19 (Jun 1952) Russ Heath digs up something for us besides great art on this classic cover (below right).

Suspense #19, while nowhere near as glorious as #18, still provides a lot of entertainment.

Suspense #22 (September, 1952) has a grisly Bill Everett cover - as effective as it is unsettling. The first story in this issue packs a hard punch; "The Blood Brothers" chronicles the sudden rise of pigs as Earth's rulers. A scientist working on developing vitamins that stimulate intelligence, makes a big mistake when he feeds his formula (which he thinks is a failure) to the lab pig. The scientist comes in one night to find the pig wearing a lab coat and talking.

The super-pig builds a business empire and one important product he markets is a line of pig food laced with the scientist's formula. The pigs become so smart that they subdue the human race by hypnotic control. The scientist is one of the last to resist, and even his final thoughts are "must hurry… and build my stockade...and eat and eat". Biting satire, indeed!

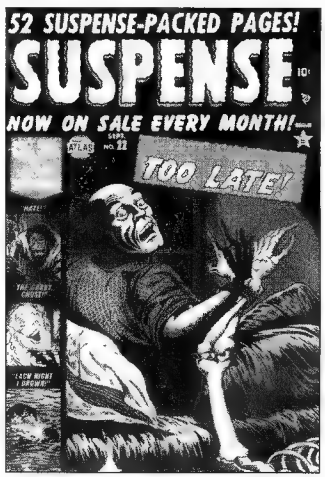
That 7-page masterpiece is followed by "The Gabby Ghost", a whimsical weirdie about a lonely spirit that scores only fair marks story-wise but racks up bonus points for the Krigstein art. "Strike" is an indescribable story about death in a bowling alley. It's not that great, but it is based on a clever concept. "Hate" offers more irony - this time out on the battlefield with a bigoted soldier - but it's still pretty standard fare. "Too Late" is an OK ghost yarn, played for laughs, more or less. The last two stories in this issue are crime and suspense yarns of stock characters in stock situations and are perfect examples of "filler". Although "The Blood Brothers" is the only outstanding story in *Suspense* #22, it is superb enough to make the issue special. And the other six stories, even the two "formula" yarns that finish the book, are all readable but not memorable.

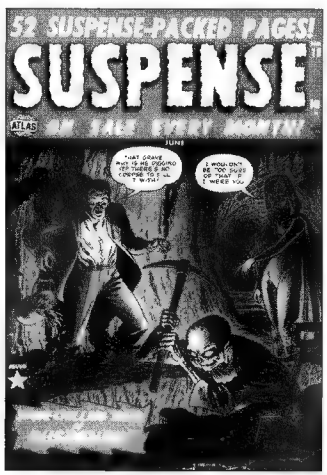
One other noteworthy feature of this latter run of 52-page issues is the inclusion of a letter column, "Suspense Sanctuary", where readers are urged to write to the editor, Stan Lee. This is another unique touch, and it's the only letter column in the Atlas fantasy books.

Suspense ran 29 issues, with #24-29 (November, 1952 through April, 1953) published at the new standard 36-page size. And lest anyone think that the death of *Suspense* signaled a diminishment of the Atlas fantasy output, please be assured that *Menace* #1 (March, 1953) came out the month before to keep the Atlas fantasy fleet at full force. ■

52 SUSPENSE-PACKED PAGES!
SUSPENSE
NOW ON SALE EVERY MONTH!
STEP RIGHT IN, MY FRIENDS! YOUR ROOM IS WAITING FOR YOU!!
R.I.P.
SHUDDER AS YOU READ THE COZY COFFIN!

Suspense © Fawcett





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Thank you for your patronage...

- Joe Dungan

Senior advisor to Overstreet's Comic Book Price Guide. Member AACC Authenticity, Certification, and Grading Committee, Sotheby's Auction 1992 and 1993.

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PoG 0	1	2	2.5		3	3.3	4	5	6	6.5	7	7.5	8	8.5	9	9.5	10

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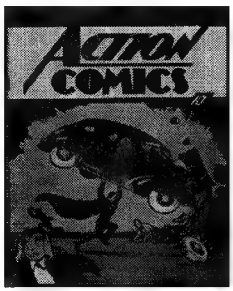
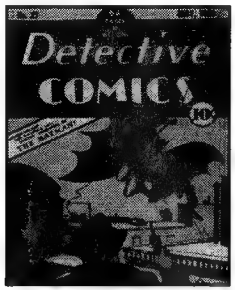


'Action Comics 1



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	G 10	VG 20	FN 40	VFN 60	NM 80	NM/M 90
Action Comics 1	$18,000	$35,000	$60,000	$100,000	$200,000	$350,000
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Captain America 1	$30,000	$60,000	$100,000
Detective Comics 1	$50,000	$100,000	$150,000
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Marvel Comics 1	$50,000	$100,000	$175,000
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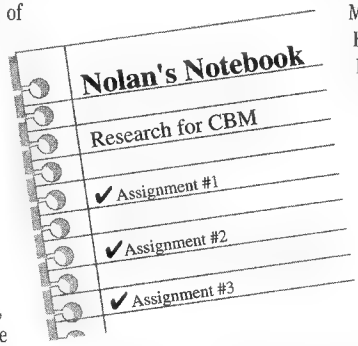
Move over Julie, Robert's here!

BY NOW, IT'S A FAMILIAR STORY... HOW NATIONAL COMICS EDITOR JULIUS SCHWARTZ BEGAN THE SILVER AGE OF COMICS BY CREATING THE FIRST MODERNIZED VERSIONS OF GOLDEN AGE CHARACTERS. BUT CONTRARY TO POPULAR OPINION, DC WAS NOT THE FIRST COMPANY TO PUBLISH REVAMPED AND UPDATED GOLDEN AGE HEROES! THAT DISTINCTION BELONGS TO A MAN NAMED ROBERT FARRELL!

The DC legend is the tale of how new incarnations of The Flash (1956), Green Lantern (1959) and other DC super heroes were such a revolutionary concept that they ultimately were responsible for the development of the Silver Age and, in fact, became much of the basis for the comic collecting hobby itself! Schwartz and his staff did, indeed, do an inspired job, but they were not the first folks to make something new out of something old.

Few comic fans realize it, but the team of little known publisher Robert Farrell, famed art-shop director Samuel Maxwell "Jerry" Iger, and writer-editor Ruth Roche were the first to develop modernized heroes! It would, however, be stretching it to say that the Silver Age actually began with the publication of Farrell's little-known *Black Cobra* #1 (October/November, 1954), which appeared two years before the new Flash debuted in *Showcase* #4 (September/ October, 1956). It's not, however, stretching anything to say that the Farrell/Iger/Roche mid-1950s comics (*Black Cobra, The Flame, Phantom Lady, Wonder Boy,* and *Samson*) were the first to combine a "reach-back" into the Golden Age with an updated approach.



Today, however, these short-lived comics and their publishing company, Farrell's Ajax Publications, are so obscure that their characters' Golden Age incarnations are better known to most collectors as "good old stuff."

Fewer Than 100

The phenomenon of the 1950's super and costume hero, certainly a rare character outside the realm of DC (then known as National) Comics, was relatively rare. Not counting science-fiction heroes such as Captain Science and Captain Video, jungle queens such as Lorna and Nyoka, and western characters such as Black Rider and Black Diamond... true costume heroes were featured in **less than two dozen non-DC titles** (except for the remaining Fawcett and Quality heroes) after the disappearance of the last Golden Age holdouts in 1950-51. Except for DC, Fawcett, and Quality... and until the appearance of Archie Comics' *The Adventures Of The Fly* and *The Shield* in 1959... fewer than 100 comics were issued between 1951 and 1959 featuring costumed heroes. And to say that most of these have remained obscure is an understatement.

These precious few 1950's costumed hero comics came in four types. First, there were the brief outright revivals of heroes who had supposedly died out only a few years earlier. Marvel's Captain America, Sub-Mariner, and Human Torch; Harvey's Black Cat and The Phantom; Dell's Green Hornet one-shot and Charlton's version of the Blue Beetle.

The second type were the short-lived original characters: Sterling's Captain Flash, Prize's Fighting American, Magazine Enterprises' The Avenger and Strongman, Charlton's Nature Boy and Mr. Muscles, and Harvey's Captain 3-D.

Third, were the outright reprints/first uses of Golden Age story inventory: Charlton's Blue Beetle (using material bought from either Iger or Fox), Harvey's Stuntman, and St. John's Zip-Jet (using Rocketman material acquired from Chesler comics).

Fourth, and finally, there were Farrell's Ajax super hero comics of 1954-55. To these 16 delightfully obscure comics belongs the distinction of being the first "modernized" super hero titles and should be given credit as genuinely "ground-breaking" books on the time-line of comic book history!

Black Cobra

In the first Farrell super hero comic, *Black Cobra* #1 (October/November, 1954), the hero is taken from an obscure backup character in *Captain Flight* #6, 8-9 and 11. The new Farrell Black Cobra, a communist spy smasher, is streamlined compared to the old Black Cobra, which was crudely drawn with an absurd looking Cobra cap. One of the stories, from *Captain Flight* #8, depicts the Black Cobra and the Cobra Kid re-drawn and the dialogue completely changed and updated. The other three Black Cobra stories apparently are totally original.

Farrell's second *Black Cobra* was numbered "6" (formerly *Billy Bunny*), but the post office apparently caught Farrell trying to avoid paying the

BY MICHELLE NOLAN

A HISTORY OF FARRELL COMICS

Farrell comics are best known to some longtime collectors for having "produced" several phantom 1940's comics listed in the *Overstreet Price Guide*, comics that many feel almost surely do not exist!

Amazingly, there doesn't seem to be much background on Farrell in the literature. Despite researching more than two dozen biographical books about comics, little information was available. But we do know that he did begin to publish one comic book in 1944, *Captain Flight Comics*, using material apparently produced by the Iger Syndicate (which produced work for several comics publishers). Some believe that Chesler may have also produced some of the material for Farrell's first title.

Captain Flight appeared regularly beginning with #1 (March, 1944), through #10 (December, 1945) (we'll get to issue #11 later). These first 10 issues are among the scarcer comics to come out of the Golden Age. I've been able to locate five of them over the years... Issue #3 is not pictured in the *Gerber Photo-Journal* and I've personally never seen a copy. It's difficult to imagine anyone turning a profit on one obscure World War II comic title, but Farrell (who probably had other duties in the publishing world) did, indeed, produce just this one title for two years

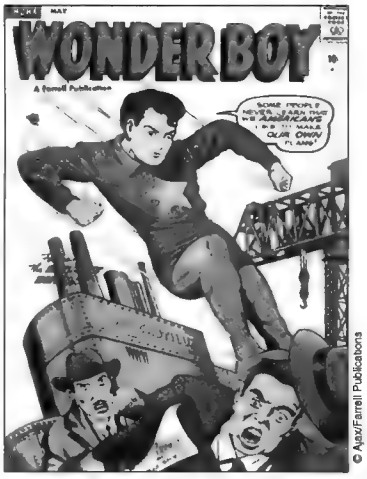
Some conjecture that Farrell was also connected with two issues of *Latest Comics* in 1945, starring that immortal funny-animal hero, Bee-29 the Bombardier Bee-29 also appeared in his own one-shots in 1945 Farrell produced two issues of *Bee-29 the Bombardier* and apparently three issues of *Hi-Ho Comics* in 1946 The first two of these funny animal titles are pictured in *Gerber* and the third is listed in *Overstreet*.

That, however, seemed to be the extent of Farrell Publications.. until the appearance of *Captain Flight* #11, the last issue! #11 has a strikingly dark blue outer space cover by L.B. Cole and has TWO DIFFERENT INDICIAS! The indicia on the first page lists only 1946 as the date of the copyright but no other date(s) of publication The other indicia (on the inside front cover) gives the date as February/March, 1947. But the "double indicia" is only part of the *Captain Flight* #11 mystery. The inside front cover also features a full-page house ad, making it seem as though *Captain Flight Comics* was part of a thriving publishing empire. Besides listing *Captain Flight* and *Hi Ho*, this interesting house ad also lists SEVEN other titles *Daffy Tunes, Dan-dee, Korner Kid, Jolly, Merry, Topps*, and *Top Flight*!

One issue of *Daffy Tunes*, #12 dated August, 1947, is pictured in *Gerber* and is obviously continued from *Captain Flight* #11 Another issue of *Daffy Tunes*, with no number and a June, 1947 date is listed in *Overstreet*, though I have no other proof of its existence What of the other six "new" Farrell titles? Although other publishers produced a couple of titles by the same name, none of the Farrells are shown in *Gerber* I have never seen a copy of any of them . but they have been listed in *Overstreet* (sans dates or any other data) for many years. I've been searching for these comics for just as many years but, I doubt any of them ever existed outside of Farrell's ambitious imagination.

Daffy Tunes #12 seemed to be the last gasp of Farrell's "empire". But Farrell wasn't down for the count. The next time we hear of him, he's listed as the publisher of *Four Star's Bruce Gentry* #1 (January, 1948) a comic (of newspaper reprints?) published in Toronto, but with editorial offices at Farrell's *Captain Flight* address in New York City (the same 1948 conditions applied to two sister newspaper strip-type titles, *Aggie Mack* and *Brenda Starr*). All three titles soon switched over to a different publisher and were being produced by Canada's Superior Comics (with offices in both Toronto and at Farrell's New York address).

Farrell continued with Superior Comics through 1949, with Roche (a well known comic writer who had become Iger's partner) listed as editor, and Iger listed as art director. The trio were credited in Superior/Farrell's first romance comic, *My Secret* #1-3 in 1949, but they were not credited when the title dropped Farrell's New York address and became *Our Secret* for five more issues in 1950 (nor were they credited in any other "2nd Class Matter" filing fee for a new title and forced him to publish the third issue as #3. This third entry also contained a Torpedoman story, reprinted from *Captain Flight* #8, but also with updated dialogue. One can only wonder what readers thought



of these "characters from nowhere". Torpedoman also appeared in one of the last of L.B. Cole's Star Publications, *Ghostly Weird Stories* #124 (September, 1954), perhaps as a reprint from Iger shop material.

The Flame & Phantom Lady

The next Farrell "Silver" first issues to appear were *The Flame* #5 (formerly *Lone Eagle*) and *Phantom Lady* #5 (formerly *Linda*). Both are dated December, 1954/January, 1955. They were forced back to regular numbering with the second issues... the *Flame* running three issues and *Phantom Lady* lasting four. The Ajax Flame was a straight crime-fighting costumed hero in contrast to the early 1940's character with a "mystic power" over Flames. The Ajax Phantom Lady was much more demurely outfitted than the flamboyant and spicy Matt Baker version published by "sleaze king" Victor Fox in the late 1940s.

Ajax's Flame and Phantom Lady were streamlined versions of the earlier Iger shop characters, who would have remained obscure were it not for their art backgrounds.

The Flame appeared in Fox's *Wonderworld* #3 (July, 1939) through #33 (January, 1942, the final issue); in his own title, which lasted eight issues (often reprints) until January, 1942; and in the Fox anthology title *Big Three* #1-7. *The Flame* is sought after by collectors today because some issues feature the superb art of the great Lou Fine.

The Iger shop originally created Phantom Lady for Quality Comics, but she appeared only in *Police Comics* #1 (August, 1941) through #23 (October, 1943), along with a few crossover appearances in *Feature Comic's* Spider Widow strip. Then Quality's *Phantom Lady* was canceled.

But when Fox got back into comics after a hiatus of more than two years, Iger later agreed to revive the character, using the unbelievable sensuality of Baker's infamous "headlight" covers to sell 11 issues starting with #13 (August, 1947) through #23 (April, 1949). Phantom Lady also appeared in *All Top* #8 (November, 1947) through #17 (May, 1949).

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The Red Rocket & Wonder Boy

The Red Rocket, a costumed hero that appeared in three versions (futuristic, funny, and modern) over a span of only seven issues (*Captain Flight* #5-11, 1944-45) suddenly reappeared ten years later in *Phantom Lady* #3 and 4. It's difficult to tell if these stories are reprints, Golden Age inventory material, or new material. Like Torpedoman, readers must have puzzled over this character seemingly popping out of nowhere.

The fourth Ajax super hero title, *Terrific* #16 (March, 1955) featured Wonder Boy and was a continuation of the Comic Media title *Horrific* (which became *Terrific* with #14, with no #15).

The title became *Wonder Boy* with #17 and ended with #18. Both of the last two issues also feature Phantom Lady stories. Issue #18 also has a Kitty Kelly story reprinted from *Captain Flight* #6.

Wonder Boy was an obscure character created by Iger for Quality's *National Comics*, in which he appeared in #1 (July 1940) through #26 (November, 1942) as one of the first solo super-powered kid strips. Wonder Boy, credited to "Jerry Maxwell" (Iger), reappeared in the seldom seen *Bomber Comics* #1 (March, 1944) through #4 (Winter, 1944-45) from Elliot Publications, which carried ads for *Classics Comics*.

Samson

The fifth and last Ajax super hero title, *Samson* #12 (April, 1955), was continued from the fantasy-horror title, *Fantastic*. *Samson* #13, included a Wonder Boy story and one of those crude Rocketman stories (probably from the Iger inventory). *Samson* #14 (August, 1955) was the final Ajax attempt at publishing super heroes. Samson originally appeared in the Fox titles *Fantastic Comics*, *Samson*, and *Big Three*.

Interestingly, after Farrell purchased a few of the Comic Media publications, which disappeared with the advent of the Comics Code, some of the Ajax publications became products of the Mystery Publishing Company (!) instead of Farrell's Excellent Publishing Company, and Farrell switched addresses to the former Comic Media (Harwell) address in New York. Shortly after that, he moved to yet another New York address. Altogether, Farrell used at least five different New York addresses in the 1950s.

Still Searching For...

Farrell's five super hero titles covering 16 issues in 1954-55 used characters that the post-1949 Superior titles). But Superior Comics, which published several more titles through 1956, used only Iger shop art, and Farrell may have remained involved with packaging and/or publishing those titles until their demise.

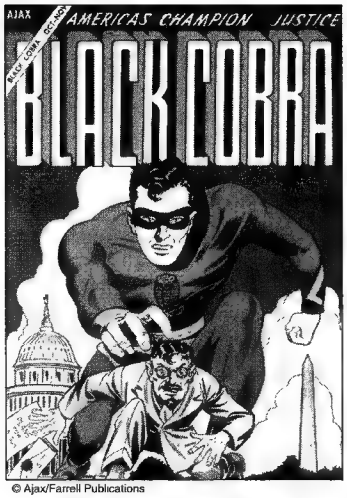
Farrell, however, resumed publication of his own U.S. line in 1951, with the debut of the first new Farrell title, *Lone Rider*, a costumed western "knockoff" of Marvel's *Black Rider*. Like he did with *Captain Flight*, Farrell began modestly. He published five issues of *Lone Rider* in 1951 but that was his only title. By 1952 he had enough capital to expand and develop what became the Ajax line (including several war, horror, western, and funny animal titles).

Dan Stevenson (an accomplished California indexer and longtime collector of Ajax titles) lists 37 Farrell comics for 1952, including the scarce one-shot *Rocketman*, a futuristic hero with extremely crude art that looks as though it were done in the 1930s. (It may have been done in the '30s!)

Bolstered by the addition of several romance and western titles, Farrell began using the Ajax imprint in 1954 (I always thought a soap manufacturer was printing these comics!). He weathered the tumultuous days of the early Comics Code Authority in 1955 with a modest output: 54 issues in 1953, 64 in 1954, 47 in 1955, only 22 in 1956, 59 in 1957 (the year in which he actually was ranked as the seventh largest U.S. comic book publisher!) and 35 by mid-1958.

Then suddenly the Roche and Iger credits were abruptly dropped from all 15 Ajax titles dated either May or June 1958... and, just like that, Ajax vanished forever with those last 15 titles.

I can remember, as a 10-year-old collector, being extremely puzzled by the disappearance of that publisher from the newsstands. Jay Disbrow's book on Iger folks says the Iger shop continued until 1961, but as far as I can determine, the last material it packaged for comic books was for Farrell/Ajax until that company's demise. ■



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all but *Flame* #2 (February/March, 1955). Ironically, this last missing issue was actually the first Ajax super hero comic I ever had, circa 1966. But like other kids of the day, I traded it away those many years ago. And like many other collectors who did the same, I've spent the past dozen years trying to find another one!

I still get a surprised look from dealers when I ask if they have a *Flame* #2.

"I didn't know you collected those old Fox Comics, Michelle," they invariably reply.

I answer, "Do you know about the Ajax super hero issues?"

Now, at least, you do! Thanks for reading and see you next issue! ■

Besides Phantom Lady, three other high demand esoteric titles by Ajax/Farrell are Black Cobra, The Flame, and Wonder Boy.

Iger shop originally packaged for four different Golden Age companies — Fox, Quality, Elliot, and Farrell!

I have been able to locate 15 of the 16 obscure 1950s issues…

Michelle Nolan is a nationally recognized collector and researcher of comic books from the '40s through the '60s. She has one of the most extensive collections of 1950's comic books in the U.S. and has contributed volumes of data to the Overstreet Price Guide.

CBM Checklist: The Ajax Super Hero Comics

- ❑ Black Cobra #1 (Oct/Nov 1954) four Black Cobra stories.
- ❑ Black Cobra #6 (Dec 1954/Jan 1955, formerly Billy Bunny) three Black Cobra stories.
- ❑ Black Cobra #3 (Mar 1955) two Black Cobra stories, Torpedoman story.
- ❑ Flame #5 (Dec 1954/Jan 1955, formerly Lone Eagle) two Flame stories.
- ❑ Flame #2 (Feb/Mar 1955) two Flame stories?
- ❑ Flame #3 (May 1955) two Flame stories.
- ❑ Phantom Lady #5 (Dec 1954/Jan 1955, formerly Linda) two Phantom Lady stories.
- ❑ Phantom Lady #2 (Feb/Mar 1955) two Phantom Lady stories.
- ❑ Phantom Lady #3 (Apr 1955) two Phantom Lady stories, Red Rocker story.
- ❑ Phantom Lady #4 (Jun 1955) two Phantom Lady stories, Red Rocker story.
- ❑ Samson #12 (Apr 1955, formerly Fantastic) two Samson stories, Wonder Boy story.
- ❑ Samson #13 (Jun 1955) two Samson stories, Rocketman story, Wonder Boy story.
- ❑ Samson #14 (Aug 1955) three Samson stories.
- ❑ Terrific #16 (Mar 1955) two Wonder Boy stories.
- ❑ Wonder Boy #17 (May 1955, formerly Terrific) two Wonder Boy stories, Phantom Lady story.
- ❑ Wonder Boy #18 (Jul 1955) two Wonder Boy stories, Phantom Lady story.

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Cheesecake for just a

The good girl to end all good girls... Phantom Lady

Not long ago and not so far away...Wilkes-Barre, PA., in fact..., there lived a gent by the name of Victor Fox. His surname suited him for it is said he was a bit of a fox with an eye on the main chance. Victor was the owner of a small publishing outfit named (appropriately) after himself. Even his logo was a fox's head framed in a circle with the words "A Fox Features Publication."

Fox was one of the earliest publishers of comic books beginning in 1939 with a super-hero character called Wonderman. DC soon put a stop to Wonderman, claiming plagiarism of Superman, so Victor, not to be outdone, came back with the Blue Beetle, a muscular character in a natty skin-hugging blue outfit who defied being knocked on the head by nasty lawsuits.

Blue Beetle continued under the Fox label until 1950 when he was unceremoniously dropped. Super-heroes who fought the good fight against the Axis hordes during WWII found themselves redundant after the war ended. By 1950 less than a handful remained, the rest consigned to limbo. (In 1955 Blue Beetle did re-surface under the Charlton Comics banner and ran for a further 22 years.)

Fiction House Sirens

At the beginning of the war, "racy pulp-fiction" publisher Fiction House, began a line of equally... for the time, anyway... racy comics. There was *Jungle Comics*, *Jumbo Comics*, *Fight Comics*, and *Sheena*, all books with glorious (if a little tarty in looks) sirens, their fulsome bodies covered in only the merest of attire. T.T. Scott, Fiction House publisher, aimed his "Good Girl" comics at youthful G.I.s dragged from their farms in Kansas, dropped into war zones they had never heard of, far away from Mom's Blueberry Pie. They were mere wet-behind-the-ears youngsters sporting an M.16 and trained to kill Krauts. They needed sustenance... they needed to dream... and Fiction House answered their wishes in abundance. The battlefields must have been just a little more tolerable with a copy of *Jumbo Comics* in your back pocket!

The jungle girl comics were extremely popular and continued to be so after the war. There were many who liked skimpily clad damsels in bondage, lording it over African tribes, killing four-legged fauna with a knife or spear... and looking damned attractive whilst doing it. Don't forget, these were the days when man was still ignorant about the terrible damage he was doing to his environment, and most still thought jungle creatures (such as lions) were in plentiful supply and the mortal enemy of man.

The Good-Girl Formula

Along with others, Victor Fox could see something would have to be done if comics were to survive. Sales were depressingly low on all fronts, and Fox comics were literally digging their own grave. Fiction House though, seemed unaffected; the good girl formula always found willing readers, be they pre-pubescent boys or healthy G.I.s. So Fox decided to out-do Fiction House on the girlie front. He would bring out comics featuring bountiful beauties who would make Sheena and the rest look like illustrations in a kindergarten reader.

& Crime Dime a Time

by Nicky Wright

Jungle girls and crime comics were the main menu for many similar publishers in the mid-forties and Fox was no exception. Soon there was a surfeit of good girl comics all pretty much the same as each other. But there was one good girl who would, in her short career, rise above the rest to become a legend in her own time, and a cult to this day. In an alluring blue costume, red cape flowing from shapely shoulders, the Phantom Lady was the good girl to end all good girls.

A Quality Creation

Victor Fox cannot be credited for creating Phantom Lady; the honors go to Richard "Busy" Arnold's Quality Comics Group. In August 1941 Quality came out with *Police Comics* featuring the first appearance of Plastic Man among others. One of the "among others" was the Phantom Lady.

In 1941 the Phantom Lady was very much an "among other" strip. Many publishers went to outside art studios for additional strips to fill their 64 page comic books and Quality used the Eisner/Iger Studio, an already established and credible concern. In fact it was Jerry Iger who founded Sheena, Fiction House's most popular jungle girl. Originally conceived as a daily strip for European newspapers, Sheena eventually became an integral part of the Fiction House stable.

Nobody really knows who thought up the Phantom Lady, though it probably was somebody in the Iger shop. Perhaps Quality comics suggested a femme fatale to round off the new comic, or perhaps Iger suggested the concept himself. Anyway, the Phantom Lady became a *Police Comics*' filler and so remained until Quality and Iger parted company in late summer, 1943. In fact the last appearance of Quality's Phantom Lady was in *Police Comics* #23, October 1943.

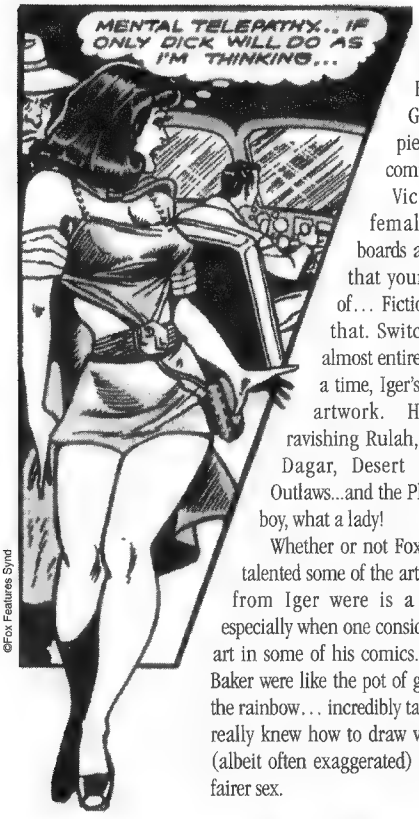
Mind you, Quality's Phantom Lady was pretty innocuous, a gentle soul quite unlike what she eventually became. Her outfit was drab, her tales forgettable, and a rival to Sheena she most certainly was not. There was nothing about her to excite love-lorn G.I.s far from home, and nothing to tickle the awakening monster in pre-pubescent kids, though some in certain conservative circles must have certainly taken umbrage.

Sex & crime at a dime a time

Four years (that seemed like fourteen) were to pass before the Phantom Lady returned from her hiatus, though in a guise totally different from what went before. Not having all the facts in front of us we can only surmise her re-incarnation. Iger's shop was still going strong after the war but with a basket full of exceptional new talent.

There was Al Feldstein who did backgrounds before he went to a company called EC. Jack Kamen was also with Iger… his artistry with the fair sex outstanding. Kamen also went to EC.

Finally there was Matt Baker, a slightly built, good looking African American who joined Iger's studio in 1944. His claim to fame was his women… he drew sexy girls



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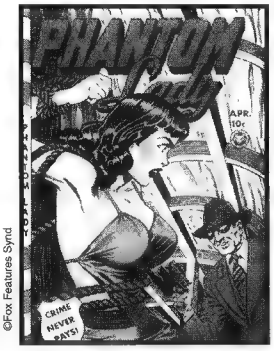
with voluptuous curves in all the right places and soon he was drawing many Fiction House features such as Tiger Girl and Sky Girl, the latter a piece de resistance in good girl comic art.

Victor Fox liked the buxom females covering the drawing boards at Iger's studio. Here was stuff that young lads' dreams were made of... Fiction House had already proved that. Switching gears, Fox went over almost entirely to sex and crime at a dime a time, Iger's studio providing most of the artwork. Here was the ravishing Rulah, Jungle Goddess, Dagar, Desert Hawk, Women Outlaws...and the Phantom Lady. Oh boy, what a lady!

Whether or not Fox recognized how talented some of the artists he contracted from Iger were is a moot point... especially when one considers the third-rate art in some of his comics. But Kamen and Baker were like the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow... incredibly talented artists who really knew how to draw visually stunning (albeit often exaggerated) renditions of the fairer sex.



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SEXUAL INNUENDO and double-entendre can be found hiding among the panels of many Phantom Lady stories

Unlike Fox, Jerry Iger knew good artists when he saw them. When Baker turned up on his doorstep in 1944 he realized that here was exceptional talent. He didn't think twice about it, hired Matt Baker on the spot, and put him to work on various Fiction House features including *Jumbo Comics'* Sky Girl. Judging by the antics and contorted positions Sky Girl got herself into, it is pretty obvious Baker enjoyed working on this strip.

Baker's Buxom Queen

Fox (probably with the help of Jerry Iger) created a line of bosomy jungle girls with fancy names like Rulah and Zegra, dressed in far less attire than any of the good girls over at Fiction House. Then somebody suggested the Phantom Lady. We can only guess that Fox bought the rights to the strip from Arnold and asked Iger to jazz her up a bit. Iger in turn handed the job over to Matt Baker.

Oh, boy! What changes Matt Baker made to the original concept. In fact Baker's Phantom Lady was as different from the Quality version as chalk is from cheese. A good analogy, actually. The original Phantom Lady could be described as chalk, her re-birth as pure cheese... cheese cake that is! Phantom Lady's other self, Sandra Knight, daughter of wealthy and widely respected Senator Knight, was carried over from Quality as was her boyfriend Don Borden. Home was Gotham City (??) though the locale eventually changed for very obvious reasons.

Although the comics field was brimming over with good girls from Fawcett's conservative Nyoka to the sexy Sheena, nobody could touch the Phantom Lady. In Matt Baker's hands she was absolute queen; her costume, which consisted of blue hot pants, snazzy waist cut halter, red belt and cape, sensual stuff, especially in the way it covered Phantom Lady's somewhat over-endowed figure.

Kamen Comments

Jack Kamen worked alongside Matt Baker and Al Feldstein in the Iger studios, and as all good girl art aficionados know, Kamen was a dab hand at drawing women as well. In fact Kamen supplied most of the Rulah covers, and penciled many of the Sheena figures for *Jumbo* and *Sheena Comics*.

"I always had an ability with women", laughed Jack Kamen during a recent telephone interview. "Whenever there were girls to do I would always get the job of either inking them or drawing them. I first began with Iger after a stint with Chesler Studios, and was with Iger for roughly one year before being inducted into the army in 1942. When the war ended, I returned to Iger."

Jack Kamen continued: "When Jerry Iger rehired me, Matt Baker was in the shop. I had never met him before... remember, I was away for four years... and he was doing a lot of the girl things. I suppose I became his major competition in doing women.

Matt Baker was very, very...how shall I say it? Very temperamental. He wasn't very commercially minded. He liked to do his own strip, his own inking, his own work. Quite often there would be a juicy assignment to do, and Jerry would give it to me because Matt was busy with Phantom Lady. After working in the shop for several years, Matt's temperamental bouts resulted in his deciding that he wanted to work at home. There he was, working in comfort, getting a good page rate, so I went to

Jerry and said I'd like to work at home as well. Iger agreed and that got me out of the studio."

Unsung Creators

Meanwhile Baker's work on the Phantom Lady was selling a lot of comics. His rendering of the character was everything those with their hormones in the right places would love. Phantom Lady made it intact through 37 rousing adventures, all written by a demure woman who worked in the Iger studio.

It's now quite apparent that Ruth Roche (who went under the pen name of Gregory Page) had quite a vivid imagination; whether any of her tales were prompted by her husband, a New York city policeman whose surname was Manning, is pure supposition.

Along with Ruth is another unsung Phantom Lady contributor. It is important to reiterate that Al Feldstein was at the Iger studio and should be credited for the backgrounds in Phantom Lady and, I suspect, some of the male figures as well. But the shapely ladies were all by Baker.

Headlights

Phantom Lady appeared in two Fox titles, her own, and *All Top Comics*. Both titles encouraged the wrath of anti-comics champion Dr. Fredric Wertham, who used an illustration from *All Top* and a *Phantom Lady* cover in his infamous book *Seduction of the Innocent*. More than anything, it was Baker's exuberant bondage cover on *Phantom Lady* #17 that drew the attention of all those "civic-minded" folks in Congress, in the National Parent/Teachers Association, in the evangelical church movement, and in the Daughters of the American Revolution. Admittedly, Phantom Lady had huge breasts... admittedly her posture was purposefully sexy... and admittedly her covers had a penchant for bondage. Not an issue of *Phantom Lady* was complete without the heroine being bound and gagged, often in poses no ordinary mortal's physique could possibly have endured.

That bondage cover for issue #17 brought Phantom Lady to the notice of the world. The controversy surrounding it turned Phantom Lady into a cult figure, and, as a result, issues of *Phantom Lady* have became collector's gold dust. Issue No. 17 now fetches four figures in high grade and even lesser condition copies are in high demand.

Even a casual examination reveals why Doc Wertham got excited. Phantom Lady riveted reader attention with the biggest pair of mammary glands ever to grace a comic book cover. I mean, they were ENORMOUS! Wertham had a field day with his caption describing the cover as "Sexual stimulation by combining 'headlights' with the sadist's dream of tying up a woman".

As Jack Kamen said, "Baker had some intricate poses I'd never seen before, and he showed me a bunch of girlie magazines he used for reference in his work on Phantom Lady. Magazines like Girlie Caper... pretty raunchy stuff. Matt said to me that they were better than

CBM SPOTLIGHT

Who is this Nicky Wright fellow anyway?

Nicky has been around for some considerable time. He's worked with the likes of such notables as the Rolling Stones and The Beatles and if you're curious about his age, well, he's both older and younger than the Stones and Beatles.

Nicky has always loved the printed word. As a youngster he read anything he could get his hands on; books, comics, newspapers, even cereal boxes! He even used to make up his own "Radio/TV Guide", carefully writing interviews and making up imaginary daily shows... and presenting them to his family cats!

Nicky's father, David Wright, was a commercial artist who found fame doing delightful pin-ups during WWII. From 1944 until 1950 he did pretty girl covers for Hearst's "American Weekly" magazine. Then Nicky's father went into strip cartooning, culminating in the famous Carol Day strip which appeared every day in the Daily Mail newspaper. It was syndicated in 30 countries, including several north-eastern American dailies. It might have done better in the states, but King Features said it was "too adult for American readers!"

By this time Nicky had become a dedicated American comic book fan. His first American comic was an English reprint of Fawcett's "Nyoka the Jungle Girl." Others soon followed. He loved "Captain Marvel," "Capt. Marvel Jr.," "Whiz." "Tom Mix"... in fact all the Fawcett reprints. Then one day Nicky's uncle bought him a genuine American edition of "Tom Mix." Wow! 52 pages and all in color.

It didn't take the young Wright lad long to work out the exchange rate, save his pocket money, and send international money orders to Fawcett and DC for subscriptions. Soon he had a rather handsome collection of British-edition American comics and original American edition comics. All the kids in Nicky's neighborhood wanted his American comics back then but he adamantly refused to trade them under any circumstances!

One day during the early 1950s, Nicky's dad bought the book Seduction of the Innocent. (Old Doc Wertham had apparently alarmed British moms and dads too!) Nicky's mother randomly selected an Archie comic out of his special collection drawer. In it Archie (or another Archie character) was hitting a girl in the face. It was an innocent slap and Archie was demonstrating something to her in fun. But Nicky's mom didn't read the explanatory text. She thought "here is an example of the violence to women Wertham is talking about!"

After his mother discussed the example with his father, the gardener was instructed to burn every single comic book while Nicky was at school... totally unaware of the calamity. Since that fateful day, Archie and his pals have no place in the Wright home... they bring back much too painful a memory!

As childhood left Nicky Wright, Rock 'n' Roll, Elvis haircuts, and girls occupied his time. By 1957 the British edition market was virtually over and most American comics were original American editions. Some time passed, and he began collecting comics once again, when he spied a copy of Amazing Fantasy #15 with the first Spider-Man story. He then went on to buy the first issue of "Spider-Man," and began to buy back issues of Fantastic Four and other titles. By the dawn of 1964, Nicky had amassed a great "second" collection of Silver Age books.

Then for the next five years his work photographing pop rock groups and "show-biz" folks became the number one priority. It was during this time that he was sharing a flat in London in

continued on page 29

the anatomy books because you have everything there in photography".

In hindsight, it seems people got over-wrought about very little. For example, consider the work of Art Nouveau artists Mucha and Beardsley, especially Aubrey Beardsley. His much acclaimed black and white renderings of erotica leave little to the imagination. And nobody makes much noise about the pin-up artistry of girlie greats such as Petty, Vargas, and Wright either. Yet for some reason, comic book critics still like to point to Phantom Lady and her "headlights" with a condemning finger.

Who was Phantom Lady?

What sort of person was the delectable Phantom Lady? Born with a silver spoon in her mouth there really was no need for Phantom Lady's alter-ego Sandra Knight to do anything... let alone don an eye catching costume and take on the underworld. Perhaps the thought of an endless round of society parties, Wimbledon tennis in June, or acting as hostess to foreign diplomats was too empty a lifestyle for Sandra. Her father was doing his thing for his country so why shouldn't she?

Of course nobody knew Sandra Knight and Phantom Lady were one and the same person. Not even her fiancee Don Borden. All I can say is they must have been either short-sighted or very unobservant considering Sandra didn't change her hair style or wear a mask in her Phantom Lady guise. Boy! How dumb can you get? Ah, well, who cared? I don't suppose many people got past ogling Phantom Lady's exaggerated poses to read the somewhat lightweight prose.

Yes, the scripts are lightweight. Sandra Knight does her thing as a dutiful Senator's daughter, acting like Barbie and living the good life as a Senator's daughter probably would. Her fiancee, Don seems a bit of a drip, but he is a nice guy who only means well. His good looks seem to overpower his little grey cells. Sandra really liked him even though it was pretty obvious she realized he was no Einstein.

Condemned for Venus

Choosing a couple of well written Phantom Lady tales isn't all that easy, but I suppose issues #14 and #19 are "above the norm". Of these, "Condemned for Venus" in issue #14 is one of the best in my opinion. The story

line is original, the artwork by Baker excels even his own excellence. "Condemned for Venus" could well have come from the files of the police department that employed Ruth Roche's husband. Naturally the story, if true, has been considerably liberalized with artistic license to add dramatic... and sexy... impact. And there's plenty of impact in "Condemned for Venus." Plenty!

The story concerns a beautiful blonde girl clad in a figure hugging green dress that mysteriously rides up her thighs as she walks the rain-swept streets of Washington, D.C. A car drives by with Sandra Knight at the wheel. Sandra recognizes the girl as Kitty Manders, an old friend.

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Sandra stops her car and gives the soaked Kitty a lift. She can't understand Kitty's reluctance to be chummy after all this time. Once at Sandra's home Kitty changes out of her wet clothes (which is an excuse for a "leg" panel). Then the police arrive and arrest Kitty for murder. "...the law is impatient to get this dame!" says one of the officers.

Later, in what must have been one of the fastest trials in American history, Kitty is found guilty and sentenced to death. Equally quick was the execution date...48 hours later! Finding a wedding band in Kitty's dress, Sandra visits her old friend in prison; turns out Kitty was married and thought her husband had committed the murder, but is willing to take the blame for his alleged misdeed.

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At this point Sandra changes into her other self, the seductive Phantom Lady. She appeals to the governor who refuses to listen. "All the evidence I need is in my safe", he says and orders a police guard to protect it.

Across town a gangster's moll (exhibiting shapely legs and thighs, natch) reads a newspaper. Her two colleagues murdered a guard during a bank robbery. It turns out Kitty's husband was in on the deal but had a fit of conscience and warned the guard. The hoods take flight, shoot the guard, and Kitty's husband runs off with them. They knock him out and lock him in a room when they find out Kitty thinks her hubby did the killing, and that she is taking the rap for him. "What a break," smirks one of the bad guys.

Meanwhile, back at the Governor's place

Meanwhile Sandra in her guise as the Phantom Lady is caught at the Governor's safe by the two guards. This is a convoluted scheme of Phantom Lady's to enable her to be taken to jail. She succeeds, uses her famous Blackout Ray to temporarily blind the warden. (The famous and highly useful ray was invented by a Professor Davis and given to Phantom Lady's father.) She knocks out the warden, lets Kitty out of jail, steals a police car, and kidnaps the governor (whew).

Bundling the governor into his own car, "You'll get ten years for this, Phantom Lady..." the girls drive off with him. Two motor-cycle cops see the car go by and thinking the governor needs an escort, follow behind. One cop sees the girls and says: "Hey! He's got a couple of girls with him! Maybe we ought to let the old boy have his fun!"

THE END is in sight for this hapless perpetrator of crime as Phantom Lady solves another case.

PHANTOM LADY
By Arthur Peddy
THE SOCIETY COLUMNS RECORD THE ACTIVITIES OF SANDRA KNIGHT, DEBUTANTE DAUGHTER OF SENATOR HENRY KNIGHT. . NO ONE SUSPECTS THAT FRIVOLOUS SANDRA IS ALSO THE PHANTOM LADY, WHOSE BATTLES AGAINST SPIES AND PUBU ENEMIES CONSTANTLY MAKE THE HEADLINES. .
©Fox Features Synd

THE ORIGINAL Phantom Lady as she appeared in her very first story in the pages of Police Comics #1 (Aug 1941)

Kitty's desperate; she feels she has nothing to lose, so she pulls a gun she discovers in the glove-box and demands that Phantom Lady follow her directions to the crooks' hideout. Led by the Phantom Lady a swift battle ensues resulting in the hoods being caught. Kitty is granted a reprieve, and is then reunited with her husband.

"Condemned for Venus" is full of action, well drawn, but for Baker, quite restrained when it comes to the girls. Only the opening splash panel is Matt Baker in full cry; it shows Kitty and the gangster's moll having a provocatively positioned fight... and has no bearing on the story whatsoever... it's obviously there just to titillate.

A Shroud for the Bride

In contrast to "Condemned for Venus", there's absolutely nothing restrained about "A Shroud for the Bride" (in the same issue). The story is about four girls trying to hook an elderly but extremely wealthy man. All the girls are at a fancy dress ball. Pork Mead (he's the rich guy) only has eyes for the waitress he's picked up. The other three girls are enraged... something is bound to happen!

Phantom Lady is also at the ball, to keep an eye on things. But even so, she is unable to prevent the waitress from being shot and killed. But the killer leaves a high heel dress shoe behind. Applying the old glass slipper/ugly sisters routine, Phantom Lady takes the shoe to try on each girl. In a series of incredibly sexy, pin-up style panels (which include women fighting women) Phantom Lady finally nails the culprit. But it is this story that plainly shows why Phantom Lady was so popular... and controversial... during her short two year run. I can just see Dr. Wertham reacting to this one.

Bigger Than Life & Better Than Sheena

Phantom Lady was every red blooded male's wish fulfillment. (And maybe a few "perverted" ones as well.) Although she came from the top drawer of society, she looked more like the girl a young man would be reluctant to bring home to meet mom. Nevertheless the Phantom Lady was easily the best of the "good girl" bunch and, in this writer's opinion, light-years ahead of her biggest rival, Sheena... who was too blonde, over-done, and inclined to be "fat" once she stopped prancing about in the trees. (I'll

no doubt hear from a few Fiction House fans over that one, but it's how I feel.)

Finding Phantom Lady

As most collectors and dealers will confirm, original copies of *Phantom Lady* are scarce. Seems people hang onto them, and when one comes up for sale, whoosh! It's gone. They're also quite expensive. Controversial issue #17 goes for more than $1500 these days, in NM condition, that is.

Still, if you like Phantom Lady and originals are financially out of reach, check out AC Comics' *Good Girl Art Quarterly Comics*. Each issue features one, maybe two reprints of the original Phantom Lady tales... along with other choice Baker strips such as Sky Girl. Ask your dealer to order the 19 excellent and inexpensive issues published so far. There is also *Golden Age Greats Vol. II* which is all Phantom Lady strips, plus a biography and historical notes about each story, published by Paragon Publications (a division of AC Comics). I think it's one of the best $10 bargains around and a lot of fun.

Phantom Lady, long may you survive in print... and in our dreams. ■

CBM *and I would like to thank Bill Black of AC Comics for his assistance; Jack Kamen for his memories; and Taylor Publishing Company for their grand book,* Superhero Comics of the Golden Age. *This book contains a page of invaluable Phantom Lady information along with a lot of other great material.*

HANKY PANKY? Another buxom blonde bites the dust in this gruesome strangulation panel

NICKY WRIGHT

Continued from page 26

1967. One day he was notified that his father had died suddenly.

Now alone, Nicky's mother sold the family home because she wanted a smaller, easier to manage abode. Thinking he no longer wanted them, she gave the entire collection away to the kids next door. By the time he discovered this tragedy, they were gone. So long collection number two!

Stalwart in his resolve, Nicky Wright began another collection, this time beginning with a few nice EC's he'd picked up for a dollar apiece in New York. Unfortunately this collection was eventually stolen from a girl friend's apartment one weekend. So long collection number three!

By the late sixties' and early seventies', comic book shops were beginning to appear in Britain's bigger cities. Sad but undaunted by his previous losses, Nicky soon got to know a couple of these shops in London and bought comic books from both... this time the largest collection to date. He was eventually forced to sell it in 1976 to pay for a month long trip to America. Suffering severe regret over the sale of collection number four, he almost immediately began to collect again.

Presently, Nicky Wright is working on his sixth collection of comics and related material, including a copy of the original "Seduction of the Innocent". He is still searching for "Parade of Pleasure", an anti-comic book thesis from England.

Nicky is not only involved in collecting but also enjoys writing about comics. His first article (the story of EC) was published in 1975 in an English Girlie magazine called "Knave". Almost twenty years were to go by before his next article (on British edition comics) was published in the original "Comic Book Marketplace". This has led to other feature assignments, including a piece to be published in the 26th Price Guide next year.

Besides comics, Nicky is also interested in cars, wildlife, and the English sport of cricket. He enjoys reading good books, and doesn't like modern comic books very much ("to samey, few words"). He likes music from jazz to Rock 'n' Roll to classical. Nicky is also interested in politics and is "an unashamed liberal."

On a personal level, Nicky Wright has two grown children, Sharon and Julian, and three grandchildren. Becky is his wonderful third wife and they've been together eight years and have three terrific kids... Ambre (almost seven); Britainy (five), and young David (age three and a half). They now reside in the historic little town of Marshall, Michigan. Nicky's two brothers (Patrick and Paul) are both commercial artists in England.

Well, there you have it. The odyssey of a young lad whose comics were destroyed by Wertham in the fifties, who survived the sixties, and who writes his way through life (no pun intended). And through it all, his love for comics continues to this very day! ■

Fox's Glamour Gal of Mystery

The eleven issue run of *Phantom Lady* from #13, August 1947 to #23, April 1949 are considered by many to be the absolute zenith of good-girl art comics! And why not? They are! Sandra Knight, daughter of powerful and respected

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Senator Knight, leads a double life with her Phantom Lady alter-ego. Sandra, "Washington society's pampered darling" succeeds in being a lightning-rod for trouble and mayhem. Her boyfriend is the semi-capable Don Borden. Don, "that beautiful hunk of dumb-bell", usually plays the fool… and the quick-witted Sandra (as Phantom Lady) pulls his chestnuts out of the fire quite often. And the way she pulled them out was what readers wanted to see! Phantom Lady didn't possess super powers per se. She basically (and graphically) doffs her dress, and slips into something a little more impractical (her costume), and confronts villains physically and with her "black-ray". In issue #13, she refers to this device as a "black-flash". In all subsequent issues it is a "black-ray". Sandra uses this device liberally to blind her adversaries to gain the upper hand.

PHANTOM LADY

BY STEPHEN H. GENTNER

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Although plot-lines and character development are generally one-dimensional, there are some quirks about Sandra that are interesting. She generally left Don in the lurch whenever she shifted into her fighting togs. A thought balloon would flash "…gee Don will be mad" or "Don will understand" and awaa-y she goes!

In issue #13 also she drives a green car/plane/boat. It isn't called the Phantom Car or multi-craft or "boob" mobile — it isn't called anything, but people seeing it know who's behind the wheel. And when she drives it, her concern for pedestrian safety is nil; in issue #13 (while not even on the trail of a crook) she drives up onto the sidewalk, sails through a crowd, and then proceeds on her madcap way. Those jeopardized by her wanton driving habits comment "Aieee!", "Whoa", or "Hey!"… and one guy exclaimed, "She's atomic charged!" Generally, any car that's handy or that she can borrow from Don would do from then on.

Death didn't seem to bother her much, either. Seeing corpses or bodies, she would respond with "hmmm" and "oh well". In one story in issue #17, a waitress is concerned for her own safety. She tells Sandra that someone means to harm or kill her. When a guy comes in and starts hassling the waitress, instead of wading into the fray and helping out, Sandra splits for a more important task… getting into her stylish uniform!

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YET ANOTHER BLONDE GETS THE POINTS… in a Phantom Lady Story.

In the meantime, the guy does indeed, kill the gal. Upon her return, Sandra says, "Gee, she's dead. Oh, here's a clue" and off she goes… no tears… no

AIIII!
SCREAM ALL YOU WANT, BABY! THE LOUDER THE BETTER! WHILE THE COPS IS HOLDIN' THEM ALL FER MURDER, ME PAL AND ME WILL BEAT IT WITH THE GOLD!

©Fox Features Synd.

INFAMOUS AND CRUEL! It's hard to believe the "scream all you want, baby!" murder panel was not mentioned in Dr. Wertham's Seduction of the Innocent

concern... no remorse... no nothing! She seems more concerned with stains on her dress than with the death of a friend. I may be doing the great actress an injustice, but Katherine Hepburn's inner strength and individuality seem to be the personality archetype that the authors "attempted" to pattern Sandra after. She is self-sufficient and solitary as an oyster, except for those occasions she needs Don for some "solace".

The essential element that allows the overall Phantom Lady plot vehicle to work is the masterful artwork of the "King of Good Girl Artists" - Matt Baker. Baker's ability to draw buxom, wanton, unknowing, and "splayed" females is legendary.

Doc Wertham's "most hated" has become every collector's "most wanted"!

His work on Phantom Lady is perhaps his best known, although he produced work for Fiction House and other Fox titles (among others) during his regrettably short career. One of the few acclaimed and highly regarded Afro-American artists of the late Golden Age, Baker's life was cut short due to a heart condition. Yet his legacy lives on in the amazing artwork he produced. That's partially due to the way Baker utilized strange and striking panel layouts to get his "points" across. He was incredible at womanly proportion, as well as being able to draw hair in a full, lush, and sensual style. His cars were all well defined, and people spilling out of and into them kept the story fast-paced.

One can't view the interior artwork of Phantom Lady and not understand why the title is so popular with much of the male population. The contorted, explicit, and suggestive poses of the female characters speak for themselves. WOOF! The difference between the less overt and stylized art that Baker did for issue #13 and the much more suggestive and fulsome work in issue #14 is truly remarkable.

To illustrate his first style, consider the wonderfully drawn and stylistic two-page spread

from issue #13. One can see how the overall look and mood seem more dominant than the actual characters. In fact, there's a distinct "Batman-like" quality as evidenced by the billowing cape, oversized shadows, and stylized automobiles. Character movement within detailed backgrounds is very evident.

Contrast this with most of the infamous sequences from issue #14 on. The art is obviously pin-up character driven and full of overt "cheesecake." Fannies, chests, and legs in suggestive poses dominate. Limbs and torsos larger than the panels they occupy seem to unsuccessfully "struggle" to hold the characters. Certain parts of the female anatomy are always the focal point of the reader's eye.

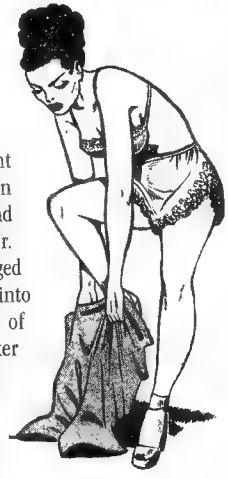
This newer "sexier" format defined the title for the balance of the run. Some have suggested (although this has not been substantiated) that there was a six-month lag-time between Baker's submission of work for #13, and his ongoing production for #14 on. If this is true, it might explain the different and contrasting styles.

The remarkable likeness between Sandra Knight and Betty Page must be mentioned as well. The black hair, the bangs on the forehead, and knock-out body all point to the Queen of Pin-Up girls! The era is the same; the lingerie is the same; the cat-fights with other women; the bondage... all the traits that we've come to associate with Betty are here!

LATER...
ALL RIGHT, DON BORDEN, LET'S CHANGE THE SUBJECT! ALL YOU'VE BEEN TALKING ABOUT FOR ONE HOUR IS PHANTOM LADY! WHAT'S WRONG WITH SANDRA KNIGHT?
The End
©Fox Features Synd

Two Phantom Lady murder scenes are particularly telling. One a knife murder from issue #16 and the other a strangulation from #18. The brutality, particularly that of men beating up and killing women, is quite evident even to the most casual observer. It is safe to say that nether political correctness nor gender sensitivity was in the lexicon at Fox publishing! This edge of cruelty along with the brutal portrayals of mayhem, torture, and death were common elements of Phantom Lady issues.

Dressed to the nines and raring to go, Sandra went headlong through her adventures... as Barbara Stanwyck did in the film "Mad Miss Manton". The sexy, single-minded heroine's hell-bent attempts at self destruction are quite a distraction (and attraction) for the reader. Bending over straight-legged to pat a dog, or slipping into the tub after a hard day of crime-fighting, Matt Baker teased the heck out of us! Long-legged, full figure drawings of Sandra, which burst the straining seams of her dress as well as the panels, greeted us time and time again! Phantom Lady epitomized the cheesecake drawings which "seduced America's children" and attracted the attention of the notorious Dr. Fredric Wertham, author of the anti-comic text *Seduction of the Innocent*. (You know, for a guy who hated this stuff so much, he sure found all the really good comics to look at!) To this day Doc Wertham's "most hated" has become every collector's "most wanted"!



PANTIES GALORE! Many Phantom Lady stories seem reminiscent of a Victoria's Secret catalog!

SLIPPING INTO THE TUB... Phantom Lady relaxes after a hard day of crime-fighting

©Fox Features Synd.

Phantom Lady has left a lasting legacy, not only

to the genius of Matt Baker's artistic style, but also the end of the best good-girl art ever. For all of us who enjoy this genre of comic book and our interest in Phantom Lady in particular, I'll refer you to the last page of the story in issue #14. The middle-right panel has Don Borden arriving after all the fireworks; asking a cop, "Say, wasn't that the Phantom Lady? Where'd she go?" To which the cop replies, "We never ask the little lady any questions, Mr. Borden... just stand back and admire her like everyone does!" ■

BATMAN LIKE
In its composition and mood, this "night" panel shows the surrealistic depiction of a big city skyline, enlarged and ominous shadows, & the futuristic Phantom Lady vehicle.

©Fox Features Synd

Steve has been a comic collector since 1960 and moved from Silver Age to Golden Age in 1988. He is now primarily interested in World War II era books and pre-code "good-girl" art books. Steve's favorite artists (as if you couldn't tell by now) are Alex Schomburg, Matt Baker, Joe Doolin, and Lilly Renee. Stephen Gentner wrote for the "original" Comic Book Marketplace *and was a regular contributor to the* Overstreet Monthly and the Gold & Silver Quarterly. *In "real life" he is a third generation Hotelier, and operates the Imperial Hotel in downtown Portland, Oregon.*

RECENT CONFIRMED PHANTOM LADY SALES
March 1994 – May 1995

FOX PUBLISHING

#13 VF+ $2,100 (3.20X Guide)
#13 VF/NM $1,895 (1.94X Guide)
#13 VF- $1,463 (2.44X Guide)

#14 FN/VF $1,000 (2.07X Guide)
#14 FN $650 (2.44X Guide)

#15 VF+ $1,100 (2.27X Guide)

#16 VG/FN $400 (2.67X Guide)
#16 VF/NM $860 (1.64X Guide)
#16 FN- $500 (2.22X Guide)

#17 NM $5,600 (4.77X Guide)
#17 FN $2,400 (4.76X Guide)
#17 FN- $2,200 (4.37X Guide)

#18 VF- $1,024 (3.10X Guide)
#18 VG+ $435 (3.11X Guide)

#19 VG $363 (2.79X Guide)

#20 FN+ $465 (2.61X Guide)

#21 FN++ $664 (3.59X Guide)

#22 FN+ $440 (2.44X Guide)

#23 VF $850 (2.87X Guide)
#23 FN/VF $1,900 (8.02X Guide)
#23 G/VG $495 (5.58X Guide)
#23 VG $350 (3.45X Guide)

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#5 FN $140 (1.08X Guide)
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UNSEEN GOLD

Famous Funnies #9 & 35

Most serious collectors are now aware that locating comics absent from the pages of Ernie Gerber's *Photo-Journal* is generally not an easy task. But, when they happen to be strip-reprint comics from the 1930's, be prepared to look long and hard! Luckily, out of a hundred or so covers missing from the *Photo-Journal,* there are only about ten of these little rascals and describing them as rare is an understatement! A few examples include: *Keen Comics* #1 (with a Gerber Scarcity Index of nine), *Wow Comics* #2 (with a GSI of ten, meaning 1-5 known copies), and the two gems we'll look at this time.

BY MATT NELSON

Despite the "super-rarity" of the above books, two others stand out as the real "kings" of the 1930's unseen gold. They are *Famous Funnies* #9 and *Famous Funnies* #35! The humorous covers of these two comics showcase popular strip characters featured on the inside. Hairbreadth Harry graces the cover of #9 (April, 1935), and Oaky, from the Oaky Doaky strip is on the cover of #35 (June, 1937).

Long undervalued, *Famous Funnies* have just recently begun to come into their own. The good news for collectors is that the entire run is still amazingly inexpensive and the historical importance and rarity of these great books makes the run really worth a second look. To support this idea, consider just a few *Famous Funnies* facts:

- *Famous Funnies* (series #1) was the first comic book to be sold, rather than given away. This proved to publishers that comic books were indeed a lucrative business. This alone makes it a major historical milestone in the history of comics.
- *Famous Funnies* #1 was the first comic book sold on the newsstands, thus setting the industry standard through which comics would be sold to the public (another major historical milestone).
- *Famous Funnies* was the first ongoing series of comics, and was one of the longest running, continuing into the 1950s (yet another major historical milestone).

That's a mouthful for just one run! It's no wonder many seasoned collectors consider *Famous Funnies* to be among the most important of the 1930s! But, beyond the historical importance and longevity of *Famous Funnies*, the series is extremely scarce. Many hobbyists that I've talked to agree that it is one of the hardest runs to complete.

Why? The answer probably lies in the fact that all 1930's books are tough to find, and *Famous Funnies* has a whopping 65 issues that are dated before 1940. In eight years of looking, Ernie Gerber was able to photograph 63 of those. Here are the remaining two... #9 and #35.

Gerber says #9 has a GSI of nine (6-10 known existing copies), and #35 has a GSI of eight (11-20 known existing copies). To further support the contention that these two books are tough to find, compare the GSI of #9 and #35 with the GSI of that other early *Famous Funnies* shown in the *Photo-Journal*.

First, most of the copies in the photographs are low grade with varying degrees of whiteness and brightness. Unlike most other runs pictured, early numbers of *Famous Funnies* show very little grade uniformity. This may be due to the fact that there were no known early runs of *Famous Funnies* in any pedigreed collections. Even the *Famous Funnies* run in the Mile High collection began with #34... and the grades and completeness of the Mile Highs from there to #80 (or so) is sporadic at best.

Second, the scarcity ratings of the *Famous Funnies* from #1 through #65 show an abundance of sevens and eights, with the occasional nine and ten. Both these factors support the scarcity of #9 and #35.

The next question is "why are these books consistently absent from our market? Even with the low supply, why do we never see the few copies that do exist?" The answer to this question is probably a history of low demand.

In the early years of fandom, these books were highly sought after, both by comic collectors and strip collectors. But since the early seventies, they have not kept pace with hero books... in spite of their rarity and historical significance. All the strip-reprint comic books have seen a steady decline in demand in the face of the meteoric rise of the superhero market during the last two decades... and prices have not moved much. While most other comics have soared in value, *Famous Funnies* has lagged behind.

The fact that *Famous Funnies* #35 guides for about as much as *Amazing Spider-Man* #35, is a startling

revelation! (There are probably more *Spidey* #35's in MINT than all copies of *Famous Funnies* #35 COMBINED!)

And it's just this slow rate of price increases that keeps many potential buyers from appreciating *Famous Funnies* and sets up an economic "Catch 22". When no one buys them, the prices stay the same. When the prices stay the same, no one wants to sell them, and none are offered.

But, guess what? These "stagnant" books are now quickly becoming "hot items" on the market! They're old... they're beautiful, and they're INEXPENSIVE! And as a result of the recent explosion in Golden Age demand, dealers are offering more money than ever for these rare beauties. And that's what collectors with their stash of *Famous Funnies* have been waiting to hear!

I have personally seen FOUR near complete runs of *Famous Funnies* #1-65 become available in just the last six months, and three of them had #9 and #35. And guess what? The runs sold like hotcakes!

I feel there will be more *Famous Funnies* surfacing in the near future. But don't be fooled by claims of low demand. These books are hard to find, historically interesting, and still a bargain at *Guide* prices.

'Till next issue... see ya then. ■

SCIENCE #4
(May 1940) bears one of the best early Golden Age sci-fi covers. The Cosmic Carson story inside features art by the young Jack Kirby. (right)

SCIENCE #3
(Apr 1940) Dynamo zaps some outlandish aliens on this superb Lou Fine cover (below)

Science Comics
©Fox Features Syndicate

SCIENCE #1
(Feb 1940) Fox starts off the fourth of their five early gold anthology titles (*Wonderworld, Mystery Men, Fantastic,* and *Weird* being the others) with sex and sadism and a superhero, rendered by the redoubtable Lou Fine. (above)

SCIENCE #2
(Mar 1940) Just before the high-tech torture begins, Dynamo arrives to destroy the infernal machine. Lou Fine's cover captures the action at the peak of the excitement. (left)

PHANTOM LADY #23 (Apr 1949)
This bondage cover does its best to display the Lady in a sleazy sensuality that is, admittedly, not in the best of taste. Check the prices on these books, and draw your own conclusions! (right)

PHANTOM LADY #16 (Feb 1948)
This cheesecake and crime cover makes it safe to assume that Fox's postwar books were aimed at an adolescent-and-up, male market. And Matt Baker's talent for drawing the female form at its most voluptuous made him the perfect cover artist for this risque run. (below)

PHANTOM LADY #14 (OCT 1947)
The term "headlight cover" is outdated and politically incorrect. But– right or wrong– this is one! (below right)

Phantom Lady ©Fox Features Syndicate

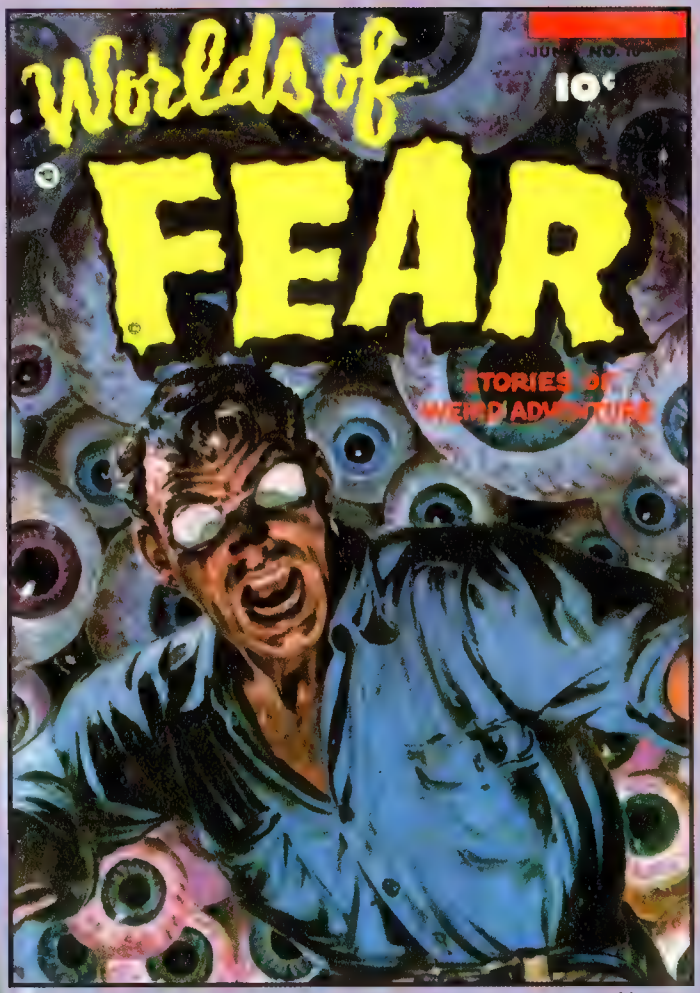
PHANTOM LADY #17 (Apr 1948) PL (as her belt buckle says) does another rope trick, to catch some attention on the crowded newsstands. (left)

PHANTOM LADY #18 (Jun 1948) The Lady plays with some misbehaving dolls on this cover. This one's a little lascivious but has enough "concept" to make it more than an anatomy lesson. (below left)

PHANTOM LADY #13 (Aug 1947) This first issue's cover has more going for it than the considerable charms of the Phantom Lady. Matt Baker makes the horrifying hand serve as high contrast to the heroine's beauty. (below)

WORLDS OF FEAR #10
(Jun 1952) This "ultimate eyeball" cover is the work of Norman Saunders, the underappreciated genius who painted the original "Mars Attacks" cards. He painted comic covers for a couple of other companies, as well as a large amount of pulp and paperback covers (right).

WORLDS OF FEAR #9
(Apr 1952) A murder is in progress on this ghastly cover; this unrestrained approach to graphic violence sold a lot of books but also inspired a backlash of criticism that led to comic book censorship (below).



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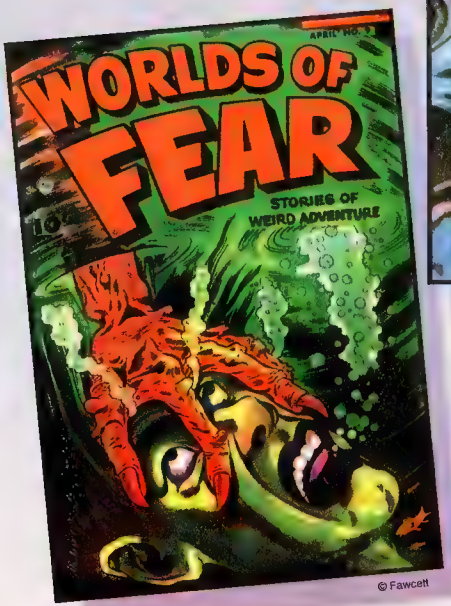

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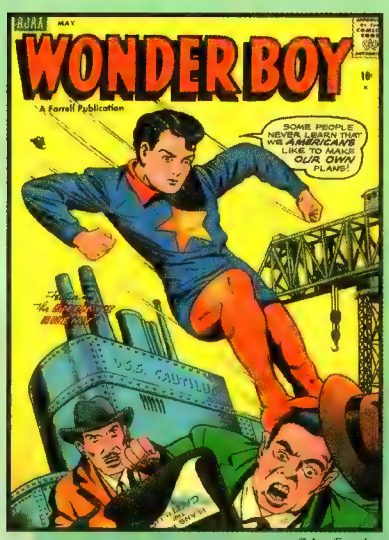

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AMAZING ADVENTURES
The FLAME
A Farrell
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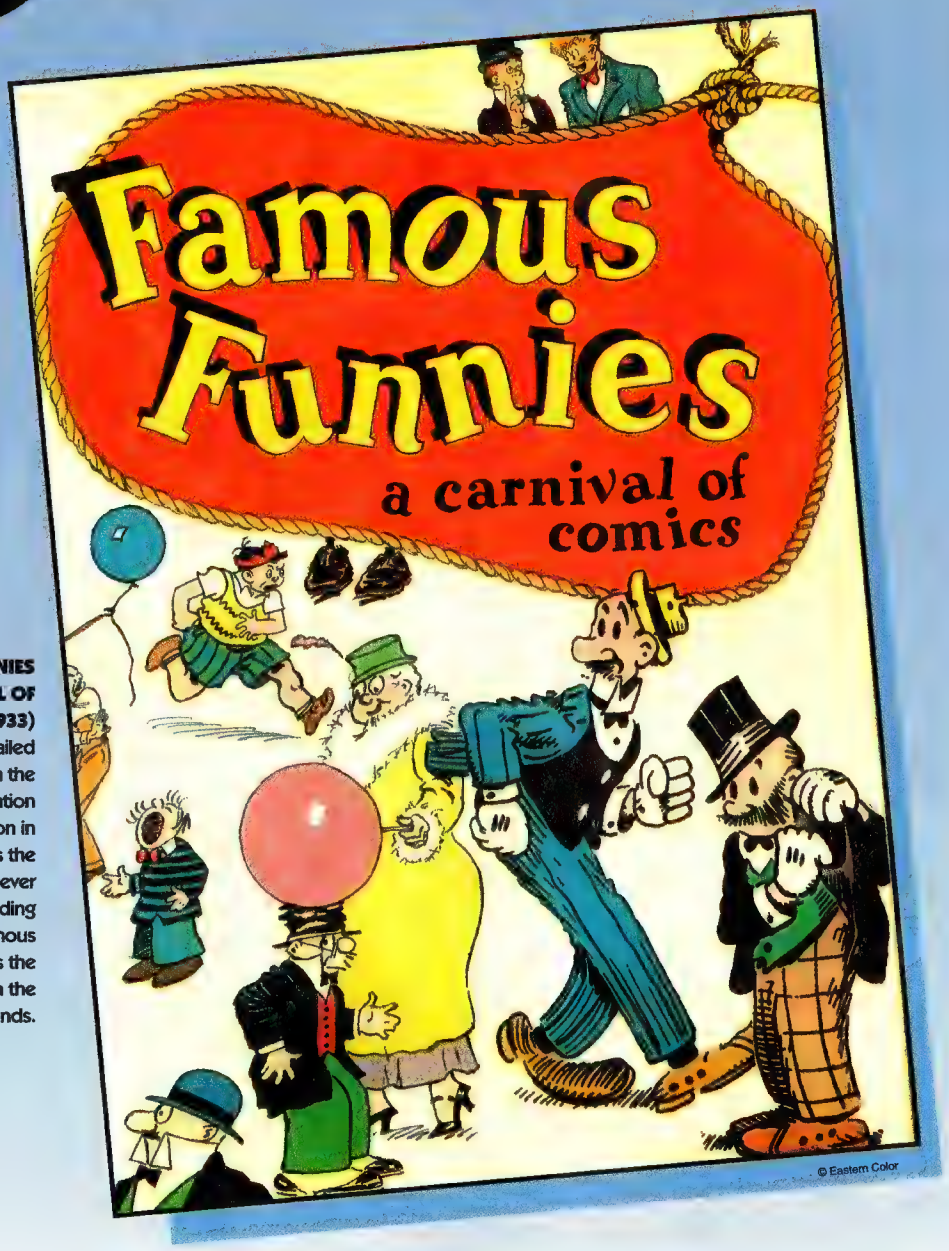
Ajax bought the rights to defunct characters from several companies. However their coming into the market with superheroes in 1954 was a bit premature. The older audience was still looking for their genre books, and the Silver Age catering to a younger readership was still a couple of years away.

COLOR GALLERY



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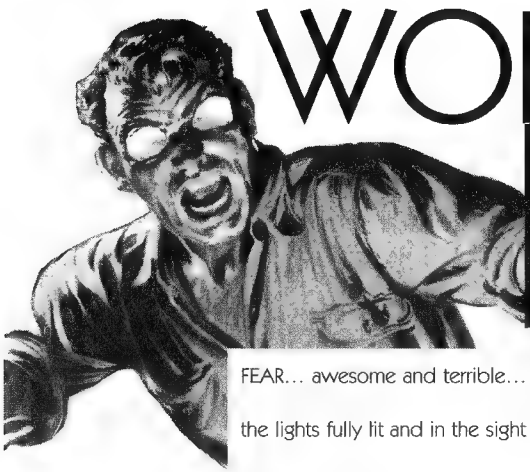
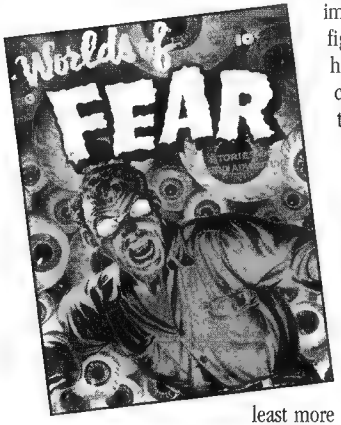


WORLDS of Fear!

FEAR... awesome and terrible... will claw at your heart in these tales of the supernatural! Only with the lights fully lit and in the sight of friendly faces will you dare to read... stories of weird adventure in one of the most infamous & beautifully rendered pre-code comics ever to see publication...



BY STEVE SIBRA

When a true comic book collector attempts to define what makes a particular comic interesting or desirable, he may consider a number of criteria. Although condition and value are usually a factor, these will not be as high up the list for the "pure" collector as they will be for the investor. Factors such as the cover artwork, quality of the writing and art in the stories, and certainly subject matter... will be more important to the collector. Scarcity may figure into it as well; the "thrill of the hunt" is one of the things we comic collectors genuinely cherish. Certainly the appearance of particular characters or story elements plays a role.

Then of course there are the intangibles. In many ways it is the overall look and feel of a particular book that draws our interest. Many factors may combine to evoke an emotional response in the collector that is at the same time quite nebulous and yet very, very strong. If you are a pure collector, or at least more collector than investor, I'm sure you know of what I'm speaking. And for a great many of us, one type of comic that conveys all these positive attributes is pre-code horror!

It has been my experience that there seems to be a higher percentage of collector versus investor interest in pre-code horror books than in many other genres. Amazingly, condition and value often take a back seat in terms of priority with collectors of these books... even though these factors seem to get more important by the minute in other areas.

So if the criteria discussed above are among the ones which you apply when collecting, and if pre-code horror comics make your heart pump a little faster, stay with me for this account of one of the more bizarre, esoteric, interesting, and exciting of the pre-code entries... Fawcett's weird and wonderful *Worlds Of Fear.*

Fawcett was a comic book powerhouse for many years, yet their line of pre-code horror comics is often overlooked. In recent times companies like EC and Atlas have garnered the lion's share of accolades for their horror output, and not without justification. But many have failed to note the quality and individuality to be found in other less prolific horror publishers such as Fawcett. There are some real gems hiding in the pages of *Beware Terror Tales, This Magazine Is Haunted, Strange Suspense Stories* and the rest. But I think the most charming and appealing of the line is the ten-issue run of *Worlds Of Fear*.

Worlds Of Fear was actually born in late 1951 as *Worlds Beyond*, with the title changing to *Worlds Of Fear* with the second issue (#2 January, 1952). It has been suggested that this title change came about because of a similarity to the Ace Periodicals horror comic *The Beyond*. Whatever the reason, *Worlds Of Fear* seems a more endearing title, and this is the title the book carried through its final ninth issue, appearing more or less bimonthly and enduring three logo changes.

Worlds Beyond #1 essentially establishes itself as a

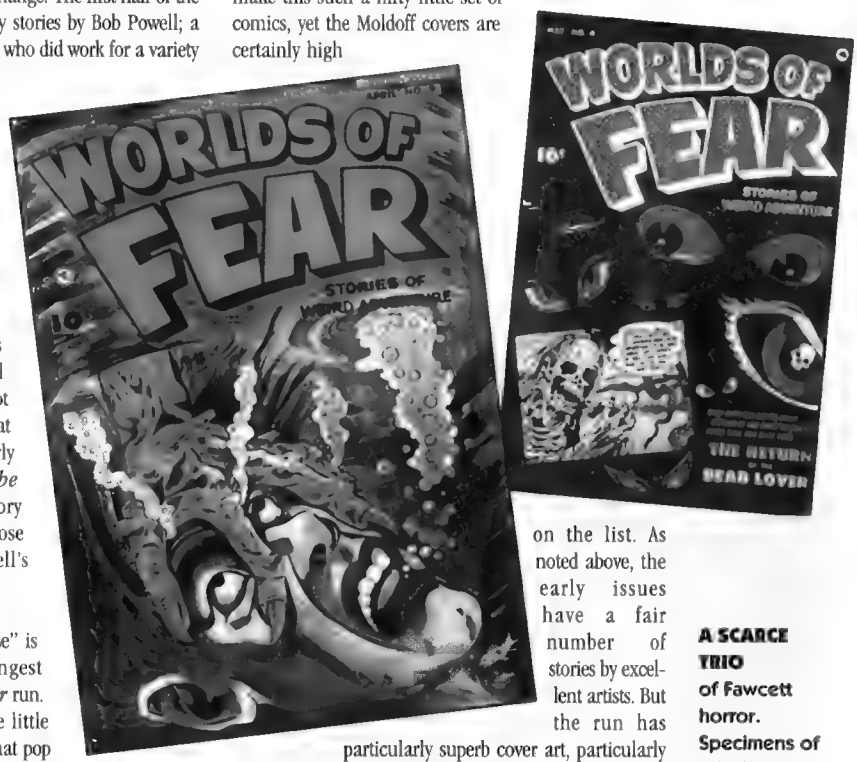
"theme" comic; all three stories deal with a supernatural trip to another world, a world parallel to ours and yet unknown—a "world beyond", if you will. Many of the stories in the first few issues of *Worlds Of Fear* follow this theme as well, despite the title change. The first half of the run has a smattering of quality stories by Bob Powell; a fine artist with a distinctive style who did work for a variety of publishers in the '50's.

One of his more inspired efforts appears in issue #4. "A Man Who Lost His Body" is the tale of an unscrupulous professional baseball player who gets too greedy and selfish for his own good (sounds like modern times, doesn't it?). He ends up on the short end of the stick in his dealings with a supernatural "world beyond". Powell did a lot of work on the sports comics that were briefly popular in the early 1950's, such as Harvey's *Babe Ruth Sports Comics*. This story provides extra interest for those collectors familiar with Powell's "straight" sports artwork.

Issue #5's "Heartbeat House" is arguably Powell's strongest effort in the *Worlds Of Fear* run. It's a delightfully bizarre little epic, one of those little jewels that pop up occasionally in obscure pre-code horror comics. The story concerns an eccentric old fellow who has a rather close relationship with the army of old clocks that sit throughout his house. It seems that these clocks are akin to old friends to him, which ends up being bad news for a couple of greedy doctor/lawyer types who show up trying to take the old boy. Without giving the whole thing away, just let me say that this is a weird little piece, owing something to an Edgar Allen Poe influence.

In addition to the Powell stories, George Evans distinguishes himself on issue #3's "The Metamorphosis of the Gkmlooms." This story has some great artwork and focuses on hidden consequences of the bombing of Hiroshima. What the heck is a "gkmlooom", you ask? Well, it's probably the noise you'd make if you ever stepped into an elevator and found one standing next to you. They look something like a huge pile of mashed potatoes gone awry.

Cover art for *Worlds Beyond* # 1 and *Worlds Of Fear* #'s 2 through 8 is nicely rendered by the legendary Sheldon Moldoff… adding to the overall "feel" of the run. It's difficult to identify all of the individual elements that make this such a nifty little set of comics, yet the Moldoff covers are certainly high on the list. As noted above, the early issues have a fair number of stories by excellent artists. But the run has particularly superb cover art, particularly issue #10 (but more about that later).



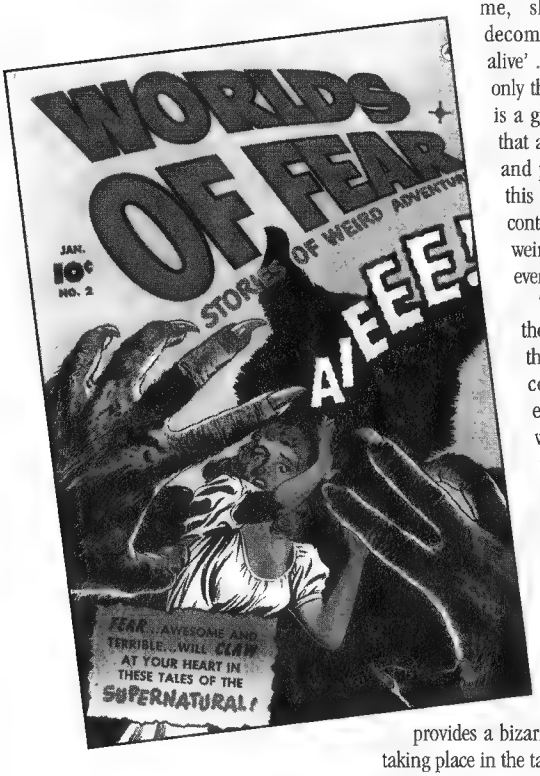
A SCARCE TRIO of Fawcett horror. Specimens of this title are rarely found in high grade.

Worlds Of Fear
©Fawcett

Yet there's more to *Worlds Of Fear* than the art or even the story content. There are a number of quirky little things that surface to delight the reader, particularly if they are fortunate enough to read the ten issues as a consecutive run as they were published.

That style of reading reveals the prevalence of the "worlds beyond" theme and the variety of ways in which it is presented. It also reveals that the narrative tone and the dialogue of the characters is rather upscale for a "funny book" of the early 1950's. Again and again words like "obfuscated", "perfidious", and "saturnine" are used. A character "surrendered his mind to the opiate of sleep". Another fellow awakens with his mouth dry after a deep sleep and says that his tongue feels "like a bowling pin in my mouth". Clever descriptive phraseology abounds, not likely intended for a nine-year-old reader.

FEAR... awesome and terrible... will claw at your heart...



In fact some of the dialogue is downright bizarre. In "The Dead Lover Returns" (#4), the main character finds himself in the world of the dead where he whines and complains incessantly that he was taken from the world of the living too soon... and wants to go back. It seems he had just begun to seduce a pretty girl, and he never really got the chance to see if he could succeed. Eventually the powers-that-be send him back... trouble is, now he's a rotting corpse! He pines away for the girl, uttering remarks like "If she loves me, she will ignore my decomposition" and "'still alive' . . . . sweet words . . . if only they applied to me!" This is a great story, and the fact that a panel is pulled from it and placed on the cover of this issue, completely out of context, makes for one of the weirder cover images you'll ever find on a comic book.

The odd names given to the characters in many of the *Worlds Of Fear* stories contribute to the eccentricity of the title as well. As you read through these comics you gradually become aware of names like Archer Commander, Emil Sonsine, Ted Femur, Ansel Jarrat, and Janus Scabroz. The recurrence of such a name throughout a story you are reading provides a bizarre distraction to what is taking place in the tale being told. Apparently in this title nothing ever happens to you if your name is Billy Jones or Bob Smith.

Worlds Of Fear # 6 is unusual in that all three stories involve, in one way or another, the miniaturization of human beings. The best of these stories is "A Death For A Death". This Kafkaesque tale of a pinched-faced naturalist (who nightly turns into an insect) is haunted by glow-in-the-dark talking insect body parts. These ethereal insects admonish him for not euthanizing the bugs in his lab before he "pulls their wings" off. Perhaps this guy has inhaled all the ether himself and has none left for the insects!?

Another highlight of the run is the story in issue #8 titled simply "?". This is a well put together horror tale about a man lost in the African jungle after a plane crash. He has the misfortune of being captured by a slew of flesh-eating, cave-dwelling, tentacled, bowling-ball creatures, who quickly devour his companions. His life is spared, since a female bowling ball has amorous ideas about him. The story has some other odd twists, including the fact that it is being told by his old girlfriend, who was all set to marry him before the plane went down and he was, well... transformed.

The *Worlds Of Fear* run is a title which definitely ends on a high note. The final two issues are, I believe, the most delightful of the run and among the most fun-to-own pre-code horror books out there.

Worlds Of Fear #9 (April, 1953) introduces itself with a spectacular cover image of a man's head as he is being held underwater and drowned by . . . something. The green skin, the purple lips, the bulging pink tongue and eyeballs, the sickly green fetid water — it's quite a horrible image. And what goes on inside is even more distinctive.

In the first story ("Harvest of Horror") the warden of the county poor-farm is obsessed with growing huge prize-winning vegetables in his garden. He gets the brilliant idea of overworking and underfeeding his decrepit inmates, so as they die, he can fertilize his garden with their corpses. But hey, guess what? It backfires and when the melon crop comes in bearing the faces of the murder victims, Warden Bradley really starts to sweat. One thing leads to another, and sure enough, our story ends with a pretty good likeness of the warden loaded on the vegetable truck next to a crate of cabbages, "heading" off to the county fair.

Another great story in this issue is "They Are Watching You", the tale of a man who has experimental surgery of some kind, after which he is repeatedly lectured to by various rodents (sort of a demented Dr. Dolittle tale).

Eventually a rabbit, held at gun point, spills the beans about an upcoming rodent invasion of humanity. Of course the rat fink rabbit gets rubbed out by his furry brethren, right on the main character's doorstep. Next to his corpse is a message scratched into a large tree leaf; it warns, "THIS IS WHAT HAPPENS TO TRAITORS". The poor man soon finds squirrels, rats, and porcupines shadowing him, attempting to dry gulch him at every turn, before he can foil their master plan. Near the end he starts drinking heavily, but alas — too little, too late. This is a wonderfully demented little horror story.

The issue closes with "Death's Bridegroom", the story of an arrogant foreigner who buys an estate, scoffs at the superstitious locals, defies a centuries-old curse and ends up married to a tree. Quite a busy day. When will these out-of-towners learn?

The final issue of *Worlds Of Fear* is cover dated June, 1953. Fawcett's interest in comics publishing was winding down, and soon all their titles would be either canceled or sold to other publishers, principally DC and Charlton. *Worlds Of Fear* ended here; but, boy oh boy, at least it went out with a bang!

The famous "eyeball" cover (painted by Norman Saunders) is arguably one of the most interesting, collectible, compelling, and just plain excellent comic covers ever. I feel that #10's cover is the epitome of the horror-comic cover, and it is my absolute favorite among all pre-code horror comics. The image has so much impact — if only there were a story to accompany it!

Regrettably there is not. But there is a pretty darn good "eyeball" related story in this issue. In "The Eyes In His Hand", a marble-playing waif, by the name of Corker ends up entering a marble tournament, unknowingly using his evil landlord's glass eyeball as a shooter. The eyeball marble "sees" its way around all obstacles and performs admirably.

It turns out the eyeball originally belonged to someone from Corker's past. But the weirdest twist to the whole story might be that Corker receives a whopping $2500 (in 1953 money) for winning a neighborhood marble tournament. Boy, those guys took their marbles seriously.

Issue #10 also features a strange story called "The Fleshless Ones", about a bunch of skeleton monsters pursuing a man who accidentally learned of their devilish intentions (which include peeling the skin off various people, stretching it over their own bony frames, and taking the "skin donor's" place). So how do these fleshless fellows seek out the man who knows too much? Why, they check his auto license through the license bureau of course. Shows good sense for a bunch of guys with empty skulls, you gotta admit. Then they politely and patiently knock on his door, rather than breaking in on him. It's always nice to see such polite observance of protocol among demon spawn.

Worlds Of Fear is a run of comics that is so quirky and bizarre, the more you look, the more you'll see. If you've enjoyed hearing about some of the eccentricities of these great comics, I encourage you to seek out a few issues. In general they are fairly hard to find, with certain issues (such as #'s 2, 4, 9, and 10) qualifying as downright scarce. But, if you like oddball pre-code horror, take my word for it... these babies are definitely worth the effort. Have fun! ■

Steve Sibra grew up on a Montana farm as a boy who loved to read comics when he could find them. In 1983 he founded Rocket Comics in Seattle, which he operated until selling it in 1995. Steve also loves to write. His poetry and fiction have appeared in various literary periodicals throughout the U.S. and Canada.

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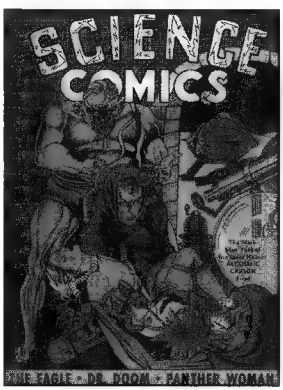
Subduing the slime-buckets of the Galaxy...

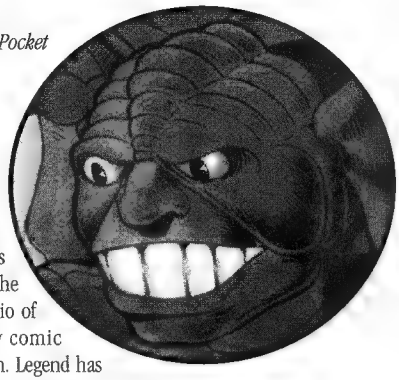
Dr. Doom, Electro, Thor- God of Thunder... no, this is not an article on Marvel Comics. These characters appeared in comic books published by Fox Publications in 1940. The first two appeared in *Science Comics*, and the third appeared in the sister title, *Weird Comics*. *Science Comics* was a short-lived title that ran for eight issues from February through September, 1940. It was an anthology title that, like many from that era, offered a mixture of superhero features including jungle, sci-fi, and even underwater adventures.

Science Comics' publisher was the enterprising Victor Fox. Fox had worked for DC and was so impressed by the profits on Superman that he decided to start his own comic book publishing company. Fox was the self-proclaimed "king of the comics", a wheeler-dealer who seemed to "court" adversity in his early endeavors. His first title, *Wonder Comics*, starred Wonderman, who was possibly the earliest "clone" of Superman. DC was quick to institute a lawsuit against Fox and *Wonder* #1 (cover dated May, 1939) and obtained a temporary restraining order dated March 16, 1939 followed by a preliminary injunction hearing on April 6, 1939. The result... there was never a second appearance of Wonderman. In fact the third issue of the title changed its name to *Wonderworld Comics*, possibly due to a legal conflict with pulp publisher Hugo Gernsback's *Wonder Stories*.

In spite of all the legal adversity, Fox hit his stride with *Wonder World* #3 (July, 1939) which introduced the Flame and *Mystery Men* #1 (August, 1939) starring the Blue Beetle and the Green Mask. *Fantastic* was added with issue #1 (December, 1939) showcasing Samson in the lead spot. These gave Fox a solid team of anthology/ superhero titles.



Many of these early issues sported wonderful covers by Lou Fine and Joe Simon. Simon took over as art director after Fox's falling out with the Iger-Eisner shop following the Wonderman debacle. It was while at Fox that Simon made the acquaintance of a young artist named Jacob Kurtzberg, (soon to become known as Jack Kirby) with whom he was to have a long comic-creating partnership. Simon also met Alfred Harvey at Fox and later helped Harvey out by contributing covers for early Harvey titles like *Speed*, *Pocket Comics*, and *Champ*.



SCIENCE COMICS #4 (May 1940) "The Mars-Man Yanked the Space Helmet as Cosmic Carson fired"
Science Comics ©Fox Features Syndicate

Bad Luck for Big 3

But "bad luck" continued to plague Fox. He created a showcase title for the lead characters from his anthologies call *Big* 3. Regrettably this was also the nickname for the Roosevelt/ Churchill/Stalin trio of Allied leaders and the new comic attracted government attention. Legend has it that such an association with comics was thought "unseemly" and that this helped inspire the new government board on conserving non-essential goods to "pick on" Fox, forcing him to discontinue many of his titles, including *Big* 3, in early 1942... just as the war and the comic book business were taking off. (Soon after his "persecution" by the board, Fox shut down all his titles, and would not be heard from until he returned in the late 1940s with a slew of notorious titles heavily laden with provocative "good-girl art".) *Science Comics* was the fourth title Fox produced and most of the features in it were derivative of others in vogue at that time. The covers of the first five issues were all by Lou Fine and Joe Simon... and are certainly the highlight of the series and the primary focus of collector and historian interest.

Roster Of Colorful Characters

THE EAGLE - was Bill Powers, a young scientist who discovered an anti-gravitational fluid. This fluid, when placed on his specially-designed wings, enabled him to fly like a bird. The Eagle took on garden-variety crooks with names like "Bulvo", the "Purple Gang", and the "Black Circle". The best things about this strip were the introductory captions... "Down from the skies like an avenging shadow swoops the Eagle, relentless scourge of the underworld rackets." In *Science* #7 (August, 1940) he abandons his wings, puts his formula on a cape, and starts wearing a mask. The Eagle continued

BY JON BERK

© Fox Features Syndicate

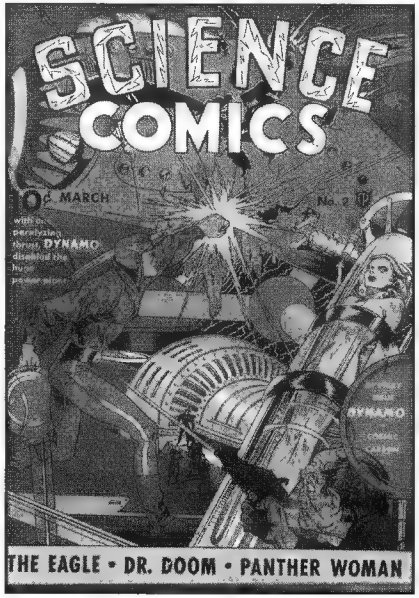
The Carson story in issue #4 is noteworthy... the art is by the young Jack Kirby, who did a lot of Fox work under the pseudonym of Michael Griffith.

to fly in *Weird Comics* and in his own title until the Fox implosion of 1942.

WITH ONE PARALYZING THRUST Dynamo disabled the huge power plant and saves the damsel in distress on the cover of Science Comics #2 (Mar 1940).

Sc ence Comics ©Fox Features Syndicate

ELECTRO... the "dynamic man of electricity", changed his name after the first issue to become Dynamo. Jim Andrews, a brilliant research scientist, is caught between two giant electrodes while conducting an electrical experiment. He finds that after this he can control electricity, create force fields around himself that ward off bullets, and fly. He dons a misfitting helmet and vows to "defend humanity against the cruel ravages of criminals and war makers". His adventures were actually pretty wild, often involving the consequences of his advanced scientific experiments. When drained of his powers he recharged himself by going to the nearest electrical outlet or railroad track.



COSMIC CARSON... was the first of the "alliterative" space adventurers of this title. Carson, "ace pilot of the interplanetary patrol", grappled with all sorts of nasty space villains (e.g. "Brigo and the Fangmen of Jupiter" and the "Skullmen"). Carson's exploits included saving a Venusian princess from cannibals on Eros Earth, slaves from the Plutonian "protoplasmic degenerator", and saving a scientist and his daughter from being injected with a serum that would turn them into insects. Although he has the usual space adventurer arsenal of weapons, Carson most often relied on his fists and savage one-liners to subdue the slime buckets of the galaxy.

PERISPHERE PAYNE... the second spaceman... is an interplanetary explorer who is called on for really tough assignments. One exploit depicts him outwitting the beings of Duotania... where every creature has two heads. The Duotanians are out to conquer Earth and their two heads each make them "doubly cruel and doubly smarter" than humans. Their plans come to a dramatic halt when Perisphere Payne sends an asteroid crashing into Duotania.

MARGA THE PANTHER WOMAN... is Science's resident "jungle girl", an inevitable Sheena knock-off. A mad physi-biologist named Von Dorf escapes from an asylum into the heart of the African jungle and holds a "beautiful white blond nurse" as hostage . His warped mind is determined to create a race of panther-men and the nurse is his first attempt. The experiment is successful, but the scientist is killed in a fire. Marga, possessed of animal strength, wanders about without purpose until she hooks up, inexplicably, with Ted Grant, an aviator. Then they share a series of mindless adventures.

DR. DOOM... is a fiendish fellow who is always plotting some diabolical scheme. His evil doings always involved

Jan and Wanda, a pair of aviators who have the misfortune of meeting up with the bad doctor on Earth or on Jupiter (where they just happen to be) at the wrong time. Doc shrinks them to the size of microbes, transports them to different dimensions, etc.. In issue #8 (September, 1940), Jan and Wanda are now newspaper reporters (not aviators) and work for the "Daily Star" and an editor named "Mr. Lane" (Fox must have had a death wish). The continuity on this strip tended to flip-flop (lax editorial control?) but it was a lot of fun.

THE THREAT OF A FUTURISTIC HYPODERMIC NEEDLE is thwarted with a lightning flash as Electro suddenly appears on the classic cover of Science Comics #1 (Feb 1940).

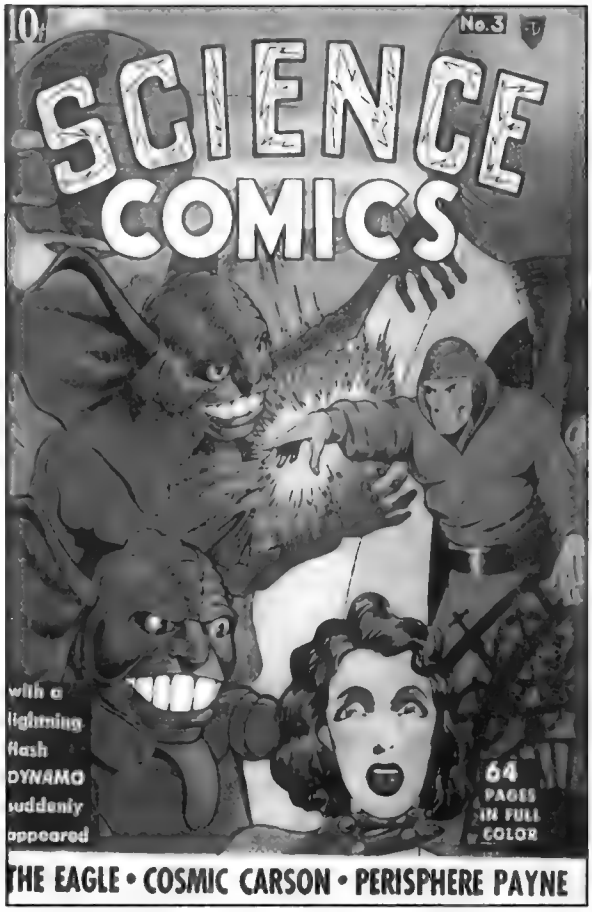
SCIENCE COMICS #3 (Apr 1940) Among the most recognizable of the early Fox covers, purple elephant-eared aliens show off their choppers.

NAVY JONES... is the last strip in the book. Jones is in a submarine when it is struck by an old mine, explodes, and he is the only survivor. He is rescued by a race of fishmen who take him to an undersea city. There the king outfits him with an underwater breathing apparatus. Jones gets into the middle of a power struggle among the fishmen, and he is seriously injured. After "emergency surgery" is performed, Jones can breathe underwater. The latter issues pitted Jones with Princess Coral and Captain Nemo (the Jules Verne character), who just happens onto the scene. The Jones story in *Science* #2 is notable because it has a couple of full-page panels, which is very uncommon in the layouts of the time.

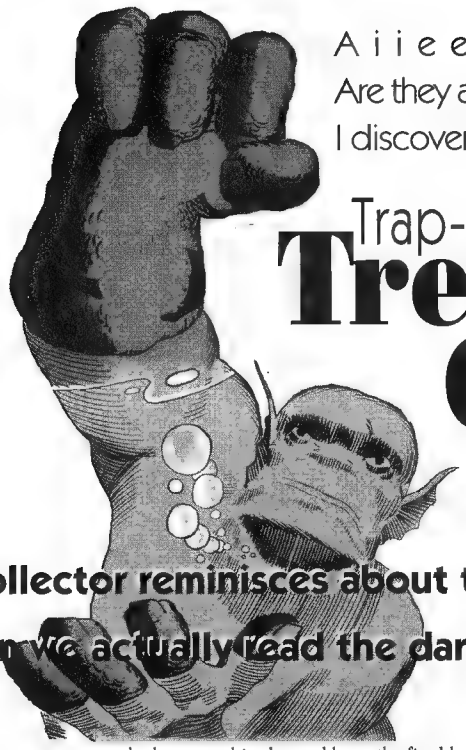
The Last Issue

Science Comics ended with #8, but Dynamo, the Eagle, Marga, and Navy Jones moved over into companion title *Weird Comics*, starting with (interestingly enough) the eighth issue of that title. The strips they displaced were clones of themselves anyway. *Weird* retained their evil scientist, Dr. Mortal, and yet another alliteratively-named space hero, Blast Bennett. *Science Comics* is highly recommended and typifies the amazing breadth of Golden Age genres and is a classic anthology title. Its stories, artists, covers, and even its publisher are just now being recognized by collectors and historians as the "stuff of legend"... and rightly so.

See you in a future issue of CBM and don't forget to join the American Association of Comicbook Collectors! 'Till next time ■



Jon Berk is the president of the AACC and is a nationally known comicbook collector, researcher, and historian. Jon's first love is early Golden Age.



Aiiee!
Are they accursed? Will they destroy us?
I discovered the dreaded secret of the...

Trap-Door Tree House Comics!!

A collector reminisces about those carefree days of youth when we actually read the darn things!

BY DAVE GRISEZ

Aaaiiiiiiieee!

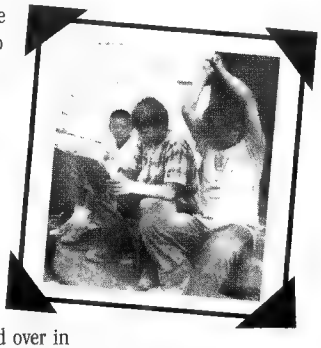
The best sound in the world was the final bell on the last day of school. For my two brothers and me, it meant more than just those three fabulous months of freedom that boys in the early sixties looked forward to. It meant that it was time to hang out with our best summer friends... the Sullivan boys!

1965 marked a special time for us; my older brother Rocky was 11, Mark was 9 1/2 and I was 8. The Sullivan brothers mirrored us precisely in age... there was Bill (the oldest) followed by Tim and then Brian who was my age.

We almost never saw the Sullivans during the school months because they lived on the other side of Bridgeport, a community of Saginaw, Michigan. However, during the summer, the Sullivans spent their time in the expansive back lot behind their family restaurant, aptly named Sullivans Family Restaurant!

Sure, they had chores to do, just like we did, but after we did them we could participate in our common interests... namely baseball, mischief, comic books and, er, well, more mischief. Baseball and comic books were the most important to me... somehow the mischief just sort of happened!

We spent the early sixties reading such standards as *Superman* and *Batman*. Is there anything in the whole world better than whiling away a summer afternoon, lying in foot-tall elephant grass reading a *Batman Annual*? I didn't think so until one fateful day. Seems the Sullivan's thought DC heroes were just too "wimpy" so they decided to show me their secret stash. Fifty feet above the ground, high up in their tree house, they kept their comic books!



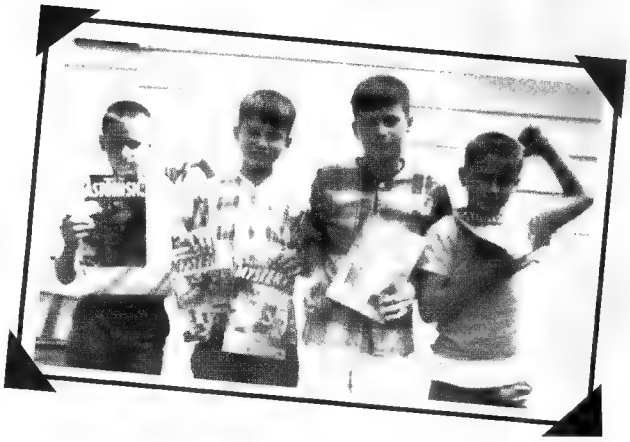
The trap door entrance through the floor was impressive enough to my eight year old psyche, but the best was yet to come. Neatly stacked over in the corner was a two-foot high pile of comics.

And what comics they were! No Supes or Bats here. Title after title was covered with monsters with the most bizarre

Aaaiiiiiieee!

AT RIGHT
Mark, Tim, Bill and Brian showing off their favorite comics: Tales To Astonish #33, Journey Into Mystery #75, Journey Into Mystery #70, Amazing Adult Fantasy #8, Tales To Astonish #15 & Fantasy Masterpieces #1.

BELOW
Under a hot summer sun Tim and Mark trade comic books on the front lawn.



FACING PAGE
Dave, Tim and Brian read a treasured copy of *Amazing Adult Fantasy* #8 on the back porch.

BELOW
Rocky holds up his favorite page from *Fantastic Four* #55.

monster names... Sprag... Zzutak... Gargantus... Fin Fang Foom! And after the monster stories were equally remarkable tales of "chilling horror", "world domination", and "haunted houses".

A whole new universe was revealed to me in those books! After a busy afternoon of baseball and mischief, nothing is more relaxing and entertaining than "retiring" to the tree house and deciding whether today's reading adventure would take me to *Strange Tales*, *Journey Into Mystery*, or *Amazing Adult Fantasy*.

As the summers flew by, I began to recognize the artists' individual styles. *Spider-Man* and the *Fantastic Four* dominated more and more of my interest while the DC heroes were more and more often left behind on the shelves at Hoffman Drug.

My family eventually moved away from Bridgeport in 1968. It was mid-school year, and I never got the opportunity to say good-by to the Sullivan boys. I've never forgotten them... their friendship... their amazing tree-house... or their wonderful "monster-comic" stash! ■

Besides being an associate of the San Diego Comics and Collectibles store, Dave Grisez is an avid collector in his own right and specializes in good girl art, paperbacks, and, of course, comics books.

5 Favorite Covers

CBM asks the question– "What are your five all-time favorite covers?"

KEN BARNES

Terrific Comics #5

(Alex Schomburg, artist) This cover has just about everything. Scanning this visual medley, I take in the following; a white-hooded figure of a man seated upon his throne watching on while his goons attempt to lower a blonde beauty (strapped and bound by chains) over a rack of spikes. (I'm exhausted already.) I follow the bullet path fired by the about to be hero as he nails one of the goons (the one operating the lever which lowers the damsel to her torturous death) right in the jaw! An element of humor is found, as I notice at the top of the cover, the hero's sidekick springing on the scene wielding a monkey wrench! So much going on and so tremendously detailed by Alex Schomburg.

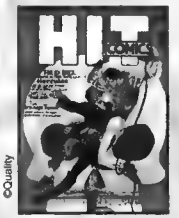
©Continential Mag

Black Terror #4

(Alex Schomburg, artist) Schomburg tells us another story with this cover as well. As the Black Terror and sidekick, Tim, storm a submarine, one notices a plethora of happenings. Two of the crew members actually fire guns at our heroes (a little dangerous but, then again your sub was just crashed), while another radios for help. The captain writhes in pain from a blow by the Black Terror while perusing his periscope. Sidekick Tim does the unthinkable as he swings a sledgehammer at one of the on-board bombs. (The monkey wrench would have been much safer.) There is one oddity that stands out in this series' entire run. This is the only cover depicting The Black Terror and Tim without their masks. Although their identities will be pretty much moot when Tim lands that sledgehammer on the bomb!

Blue Bolt Weird Tales #111

(L.B. Cole, artist) L.B. Cole gives us this portrait of evil. Two faceless hooded reaper-like figures pointing at the reader from both sides of the picture. On the left a skull, with a flickering candle dripping wax from above, grins in a hideous manner while a snake coiled round readies to strike! A demon with wings balances the right with a menacing face, hair afire. A ghoul in the center with a bizarre underbite, fangs protruding, shadowed by the dim candlelight. Hands reaching upward from the murk as belonging to the viewer beholding such a macabre display. Cole's horrific rendering is unmatched with this cover as one picture is worth a thousand nightmares. Even the price and issue number are silhouetted by bat figure and the title is engulfed in flames. A couple added candles and eyes peering through the black background, I'm outta here! L.B. Cole is the master of eerie lines and shadows that give such an animated feel to his work.



©Quality

Hit Comics #7

(Lou Fine, artist) The Red Bee swings across this cover in perfect form as he crushes into an unsuspecting knife wielding villain. A thinly clad heroine, looking on in anticipation, is chained to a giant skull figure that provides the backsplash for the entire picture. The detailed musculature of The Red Bee, the twisting action movement and flailing clothing all come alive as Fine's figures dance in freeze frame. Anatomy and action don't get much better as Fine shows his expertise at both. Way ahead of his time and some of the Golden Age's most memorable covers, hats off to you Mr. Fine!

Phantom Lady #17

(Matt Baker, artist) This, the sexiest Baker cover of them all, remains in one's memory more than any other. Baker draws with such an intense mood of emotion and flair. His Phantom Lady's eyes, lips, and body poses, paint an extremely vivid picture especially on this cover. One has to wonder if by her glance she really wants to be rescued or untied at all. Everything from the etched highlight lines in her hair to the rippled, draped clothing scantily

clad about her fully figured body, suggests this is by far the most glamorous lady to ever grace a comic cover. I'll take a dozen please! Thank you Matt, I hope you were this appreciated in your time.

My choices, for the most part, were because these covers tell a whole story by themselves. Between Schomburg's multitask action scenes, Cole's eerily pop lined "horrormation", Fine's master-lined anatomy and flair, and Baker's deliciously drawn figures, these were a notch far above the rest. It was very hard to pick just five out of a multitude of choices. Thanks for such an evocative challenge.

JON BERK

Mystery Men #3

A Lou Fine cover shows my bias right out front. I suppose others will opt for Fantastic Comics #3 or Hit Comics #5, 6, 7, 8, or 9, or Wonderland #7. Great covers all. But there is something about this large portrait cover that typifies to me the lyrical quality of Fine's covers. He has an uncanny ability to bring motion to the drawn page. Of course, by limiting myself to one cover by an artist does not allow me to mention Fine's cover to Jumbo Comics #10, or to Science #2 or 3, or to National #7, or Jungle #1 or...(Okay, so I cheated a little.)

Silver Streak #6

One look at this golden age cover makes you breathless at the versatility of Jack Cole who would gain his greatest fame from his whimsical rendition of "Plastic Man"

Target Comics #7

Wolverton rendered only one Golden Age cover that I am aware of. Maybe that's what draws me to the unique drawing style and content of his famous character "The Spacehawk".

Amazing Mystery Funnies Vol. 2/2

Bill Everett gained his greatest fame for the creation and rendition of the "Sub-Mariner". Some of his earliest work was produced for Centaur Publications when he worked for Lloyd Jacquet. This and his cover for issue #3 are some of my personal favorites.

More Fun Comics #54

I suppose I'll initiate a bunch of hate mail, but generally, considering the number of titles produced and its preeminence in the marketplace, DC-National covers don't do much for me. They are all sort of static and one dimensional. However, I find Bernard Bailey's cover for issue #54 of More Fun to be dramatic and spectacular.

PAT CALHOUN

Off the top of my head and sticking to the comics that I have...

Startling Comics #49

(1948 Better) Xela (alias Alex Schomburg) is snik.

Planet Comics #71

(1952 Fiction House) Maurice Whitman space opera with female as focal point comes towards the end of an era but still superb.

Frankenstein #20

(1952 Prize) Dick Briefer's monster with crab and croc and full moon-wooooooooooo!

Ghost Rider #10

(1952 ME) Dick Ayers gives us an ultimate glimpse of horror as the victims face goes under water during monstrous assault.

Chilling Tales #16

(1953 Youthful) Matt Fox is an under-appreciated master of the weird.

STEVE CAREY

Fantastic Comics #3

(Fox Feb 1940) This cover has too long been overshadowed by Hit Comics #5 (another Lou Fine masterpiece) The image of Samson pummeling a gigantic robot, while simultaneously being threatened from behind by another infernal machine, is simply unforgettable. Credit Will Eisner for the layouts, but it's Lou Fine's artwork and inks that really make this issue such a standout. I once owned a GD+ copy of this book, and sold it for peanuts; shame on me.

More Fun Comics #54

(DC April 1940) Bernard Baily seems to be one of the forgotten artists from the Golden Age, but one glance at this powerful cover will serve as a reminder of his unsung abilities. A huge and eerie Spectre dominates the rather simplistic scene, which captures the character to perfection. A great cover to a great book—wish I owned one!

Wonderworld Comics #7

(Fox November 1939) Lou Fine does it again—what a stunning cover. A tense Eisner layout is rendered into classic Flame versus menacing ghouls confrontation. Naturally, a cowering female is present for effect, also. I'm a big believer in this particular issue, and feel real fortunate enough to own the Allentown copy of this rare book.

Zip Comics #9

(MLJ November 1940) Sword-wielding terrors (with their brains in canisters no less), a damsel-in-distress, a muscular hero (Steel Sterling), and a guillotine...what more could a collector ask for?! Charles Biro is responsible for this wonderful cover that graces a grossly undervalued book. Don't believe me? OK, put a copy (if you can even find one) on display at a convention and watch the heads turn. Thankfully, I have the Allentown copy of this book in my collection, also.

Amazing-Man Comics #22

(Centaur May 1941) Out of nowhere comes this sensational Paul Gustavson cover. Berserk Nazi gorillas on the rampage! It appears that the Amazing-Man is stern and focusing on his task at hand instead of being distracted by the "exposed" blonde (who is reeling from the apes onslaught). Another very scarce comic a "fine" copy is the best I've been able to locate in over 15 years of collecting.

Note that these five works are not acknowledged as "classics" in the Price Guide, but clearly, all should be.

Finally, my apologies to the legions of Alex Schomburg and L.B. Cole fans out there for not including any of their great works in this survey. As much as I admire other artists, I think that Lou Fine shines as the top artist in comic book history. Fine's efforts on titles like Hit, Mystery Men, Fantastic, Planet, Jumbo, and Wonderworld (to name a few) have stirred aficionados for the past five decades. Today, collector interest in Fine's work seems stronger than ever. I doubt that we'll ever again see such a talent in the comic field.

JUSTIN KARLSON (DENMARK)

Amazing Spider-Man #2

A great Ditko cover with detail, perspective and Spidey in a great action pose.

Amazing Spider-Man #5

Ditto above!

Avengers #3

The Avengers busting through a wall and Sub-Mariner and the Hulk to boot! A great Kirby cover (and I remember very distinctly buying this issue as a kid!).

Fantastic Four #4

The simplicity and drama of this cover is great. It really shows how good Kirby was at telling a

FAVE COVER SURVEY

5

Many of best ever comic book covers, vividly dynamic.

Nick Fury-Agent of Shield #5

I could choose any of the Nick Fury Steranko covers. These are great examples of comic art trying to transcend the medium. They really represent the style and mood of the late sixties.

It may be obvious that I collect Silver Age Marvel—so I'm biased. But these are the covers I pull out of mint Hermet-ically sealed boxes to look at again and again, so I am in my favorites!

CHRISTOPHER FROST, M.D.

Justice League Of America #21

I'm just excited when I see all of my heroes meeting the old guard.

Superman #14

This is what our heroes should look like.

Flash #123

First old meets new.

Avengers #4

The excitement was overwhelming when I saw it.

Journey into Mystery #101

Forever embedded in my mind as the first Marvel Comic I ever purchased.

ALAN CHAO

Captain America #111

This was the reason I started collecting comics. A heroic poster-like pose of Captain America with his shield raised against a white backdrop. designed by Jim Steranko.

Reform School Girl

A nice photo cover of a rebellious girl on a bright yellow background.

Mask Comics #2

A high contrast black and red cover by L.B. Cole of Satan standing amidst human heads contained in a pool of flames.

Blue Bolt #105

Another L.B. Cole cover that reminds me of Lou Fine's Hit #5. Blue Bolt is being attacked by a green space griffin while an alien Dan Hastings in distress in the foreground.

Ghost Rider #4 (A-1 #34)

A fantastic Frank Frazetta cover of Ghost Rider with his cape outstretched riding his horse out straight at you. A symmetrical design against a stark black background.

Honorable mentions include almost any cover by Xela (alias Alex Schomburg), Matt Baker (Claire Voyant) Murphy Anderson (Flash Comics with Hawkman) Boris Vallejo (Savage Sword of Conan) or Norm Saunders (Marvel Pulps).

RICK THOMPSON

Captain America Comics #74

Classic Joe Kubert.

Sub-Mariner Comics #32

Subdue Dragon. Take from by Everett.

Marvel Mystery Comics #9

Human Torch vs. Sub-Mariner. Ultimate battle.

All Winners #8

A great war time cover with Miss Victory and the Human Torch.

Human Torch Comics #2(#1)

Classic cover of the two Torches.

DAN QUIGLEY

Little Lulu #16

(Dell) John Stanley

Four Color #386

Dell Carl Barks

Batman #251

(DC) Neal Adams

The Shadow #1

(DC) Michael Kaluta

Ralph Snart Adventures V2#4

(Now) Marc Hamer

TRAVIS SEARLS

Having to choose five covers from so many talented artists who have created so many outstanding covers was not a easy task. I could have listed a hundred covers that are just as great with the five I have listed. My favorite covers (in no particular order).

Buster Crabbe #5

Reformatted for this comic science fiction cover.

Seven Seas #4

My favorite "pulp girl" cover.

Military Comics #18

Reed Crandall's detail is outstanding on this cover showing the Blackhawk characters.

Startling Comics #49

One of Alex Schomburg's best polished covers. Classic science fiction cover.

Captain America #7

This cover has it all. Nazis, bondage, torture, Captain America and Bucky to save the day, and great Kirby art. Need I say more?

SCOTT HARRIS

My 5 favorite comic book covers are:

Action Comics #58

(March 1943)- This cover depicts American anti-Japanese propaganda at its comic finest.

Sub-Mariner #10

(Summer 1943)- Alex Schomburg's giant Sub-Mariner smashing Japanese submarine in half with their own anchor. The amount of detail in this cover art, shown in the red and yellow background, is for one life, a veritable bad comic orgy.

Marvel Mystery Comics #22

(August 1941) Schomburg cover. Kirby art. What more needs to be said about this awesome issue. This cover has it all. Sub-Mariner, Human Torch, Toro, Nazi, Aliens and action packed action.

Exciting Comics #59

(January 1948) This book contained (what the heck) nine stories all by Alex Schomburg. Cover and frontispiece art. A fantastic cover featuring a beautiful scantily clad Lady of the Lake. I can only wonder how the members of 1948 would have reacted to this cover.

Whiz Comics #44

(July 1943) C.C. Beck cover work. An inspiring patriotic flag cover, US Marines landing and Capt. Marvel leading the way, with Capt. Marvel flying proudly over all the action. One look at this wet cover and I feel like waving the Star Spangled Banner.

Well, so the these five covers stand out among the thousands that were created during the Golden Age of comics. That's my story an I'm stickin' to it!

STEVE ROBERTS

Strange Adventures #9

(Originally first appearance of Captain Comet DC.) Reason for cover: Fantastic colors. Super imposed world as a beautiful back background are Captain Comet in both his space uniform and civilian clothes. Also, the red and yellow colors that compose the costumes extremely well against the black background. This book is very difficult to find in high grade due to the thin paper stock of the cover and the black background. DC's ultimate science fiction cover.

Superman #14

The black background, the shield, the eagle—the classic Superman cover of all time.

Wonder Woman #45

(You probably won't find this cover on many lists of personal favorites... but check your Gerber—it's one great cover... and a sexy Wonder Woman cover. Wonder Woman in a glorious pose over a black background showcasing the highlights of her power in the quintessential female superhero (superheroine?). Extremely rare, bright cover and grossly undervalued in the Gerber relative to Superman #53 and Batman #47.

Suspense #3

The most violent cover ever will ever see.

Captain Marvel #26

The second best patriotic cover of all time. See choice #2. A wonderful representation of the Stars

and Stripes and of the Big Red Cheese—Captain Marvel. Great Book-Great cover!

JON SIGNORELLI

I'll toss my hat into the "favorite covers" survey, with a few early Golden Agers which, upon obtaining the Photo Journal, changed my life!

©DC

All-American #61

This is just about the coolest Green Lantern cover of them all. The Solomon Grundy depiction is forever branded on my frantic Want List-disturbed brain!! This is truly one of the Golden Age's unforgettable covers.

All Winners #4

See the description in my Timely article. The top WWII cover of them all.

Fantastic Comics #3

Lou Fine unencumbered by a collaborating artist, the detail is amazing, the robots simply pulp classics!

More Fun #65

Hang that Photo Journal! If I'd never gotten it, I probably still wouldn't be aware of this cover's allure. This one has it all: classic DC framework, that unforgettable Spectre mirror reflection, and nice colors...what more could anybody want?

Wonderworld #7

Lou Fine is simply the best illustrator to have graced comic book covers from 1938-1940. Can anyone imagine if he'd worked for DC or Timely...he'd surely then get the credit he deserves! This book is early Golden Age personified, and captures that era like few covers can.

I could go on and on...Captain America #7, Detective #31...but I'll only get myself all worked up over books that I don't own (yet!) This type of survey is fun... keep it up.

GARY A. HACKENBURG

Amazing Spider-Man #100

(September 1971)-Although my sister brought home comics from her high school for me to read in 1971, this was the first Spidey I bought off the stand. His 100th issue, every villain he ever fought and that fantastic black background cover. You had to love it!

Tales of Suspense #97

(January 1968)-I got this book at a band booster sale, along with 10 others...for a penny each! Cap falling to his death (and it was not even him) plus that Kirby background. All this and Nick Fury too.

Fantastic Four #112

(July 1971)- The Thing vs. The Hulk in all its glory on the front cover! This was the first battle between the two I ever read (#25 & #26 were discovered years later) I read this book in the basement of my best friend house in the spring of 1971, and after which I knew it truly was the "World's Greatest Comic Magazine."

Swamp Thing #1

(November 1972)-This cover has beautiful Berni Wrightson artwork and it was my first mystery-horror book from DC. This run of Swamp Thing remains my idea of what the Swamp Thing is all about.

Thor #193

(November 1971)-This was the month of those great 25 cent Giants. The Silver Surfer was on the front cover, which was rare in those days. My Uncle Bill bought this and 19 other books for me when I was staying with him and my Aunt Wilsie in Bayville, New Jersey on Labor Day 1971. What a cover!

JOHN MLACHNIK

My favorite covers . what an impossible task, it's so ever changing. I will attempt to list my favorite covers of all time as of today...

©DC

Superman #53

Perfect, flawless, awesome, powerful in it's simplicity. This is the absolute best Superman cover of all time and is certainly artist Wayne Boring's masterpiece. No other cover better captures its subject than Superman #53. 10th anniversary issue. World's Greatest Adventure Character. THIS IS SUPERMAN. And I'm in love...

Amazing Spider-Man #1

©Fox Features Synd

This is one of the most beautiful covers of all time and, at times, is my favorite. From the powder-blue background to the blood-red logo, the background machinery, the staircase and the railing, this cover looks pretty in any grade. Spider-Man looks like a human spider in a plexi-glass web, which accounts for the look of awe and repulsion on the Fantastic Four's faces. I love this cover to death. .

Captain America #1

One of the most beautifully detailed Golden Age covers of all time, and a Jack Kirby classic. Perfectly sums up what vintage Captain America is all about...America's "Super Soldier" created specifically to battle the Axis Powers in WWII. This one is currently third on my favorite covers hall of fame.

Batman #1

The best Batman/Robin cover of all time truly captures the essence of the "Dynamic Duo." Bob Kane never topped this cover, and I have yet to see a better Batman/Robin cover to date.

Submariner #1

A larger-than-life Namor lifting a U-boat of Nazis into the sea against a canary yellow sky makes this cover a must to frame and hang on the wall. Alex Schomburg's beautifully detailed artwork make this one of my all-time favorites.

JOHN R. COCHRAN

Picking the five greatest comic book covers of all is an excruciating task. My choices:

Batman #55

Superman #14

Famous Funnies #622

Nick Fury, Agent of Shield #6

Captain Marvel Adventures #18.

SIDNEY FRIEDFERTIG

U.S.A. #7

The epitome of WWII patriotic covers. A larger than life man and a boy take on an entire enemy aircraft carrier. Not a half square inch unused

Action #1

The first glimpse of what would prove to be an American icon. Like the opening scene from Star Wars it grabs your attention and never lets go. Entirely fitting that this started a revolution

Captain America #7

A great cover because it took familiar characters and themes and reworked them so they appear fresh and innovative.

Amazing Spider-Man #73

John Romita's covers are under-appreciated and this cover, with a superhero buckling under the pressure of his powers and responsibilities is one of Romita's best.

Horrific #3

Sums up a genre. All the other horror covers pale beside this Heck cover. Still has the ability to shock.

Diamond Age honorable mention (OK I fudged): HM. Spider-Man #1, no matter how many times Marvel prints this cover it still looks great. Showed a new way to look at a familiar character. So natural you wonder why no one did this before.

FAVE COVER SURVEY

DANIEL J. KOCHER

More Fun Comics #54

This is my favorite comic of all time for a combination of reasons. First of all, the Spectre is my favorite hero, and this cover presents him at his best. He towers nearly 100 feet above a battle that wages at his feet. He has crushed one war plane, which rests under his foot, and has plucked another from the air, soon to meet a similar fate. He is gazing at the reader, his eyes blazing from the shadow of his cowl. Secondly, Bernard Bailey's dark style is ideal for this hero and setting. If this cover had been done in a light, comic style, it wouldn't have been effective. In addition to the subject matter and the artist, I admire the statement that I believe is behind the cover. It is a war cover, but unlike most such covers, no side of the conflict is clearly presented, and this is crucial to the cover's meaning. On this cover, the real villain is war itself, and the destruction that it causes. The cover shows the most powerful of all heroes taking a stand against the idea of war. Using the Spectre as the protagonist elevates this statement to a level that no other hero could. The sorcerer's origin has Jim Corrigan raised from the dead and set on his mission of retribution by God. With this higher authority as the moral backdrop for the Spectre's involvement, the cover can be seen as a repudiation of war from an ultimate morality. All that from a comic book cover! Unfortunately, I don't own this one.

Weird Science Fantasy #29

If someone were to ask me whether comic book art is art, I would show them this cover and let it answer the question by itself. Admittedly, I don't think that there is an equal to the cover. Pleasing unlike any display of knowledge of the human form, movement, and composition (human form) - the bodies are so believable in their positions that one believes that a photograph of that event would show the same positions. Movement? - the event on the covers seems captured from an instant in time. One knows exactly what happened in the seconds before the event, and what will happen in the seconds following. Composition? - just the right number and size of objects are there to best convey the scene. The arrangement of the characters in relation to each other and in relation to the borders of the cover is perfect. If I owned this one, it would never leave my wall.

X-men #16

I really like the characters involved in this cover. The X-men were among my favorite heroes and the Sentinels were among my favorite villains. Also, I like Jack Kirby and his tremendous enthusiasm. I admire the way he created a three-dimensional image through his use of the Beast's feet, the Iceman's ice cradle, and the Sentinel's right hand, and also through his use of a rising perspective. Characters, villain, and effect make this one a favorite.

All-American Comics #61

I love this Green Lantern cover. Solomon Grundy is a great villain, and the depiction of this giant monster rising from a bog is unforgettable. Great art. Great characters. I like the spooky, Halloween setting of the scene.

Action Comics #116

I am really not sure why I like this one so much. In looking through the Gerber book, I noticed it, and it's really grown on me. I like both the simplicity of the illustration and the unique way in which the artist used only red, white, and blue.

DAVID WALDRON

House of Secrets #92

A Wrightson cover that shows his typical and perfectly illustrates what the inside story is about. You can even feel the mood of the inside story.

Flash Gordon #3

(King Comics) One of the very few comic books that I have with Al Williamson's art work. This cover shows the ultimate science-fiction cityscape. This cover should be listed as a classic cover. It brings the vitality of the Golden Age artwork into the Silver Age.

Doorway to Nightmare #1

The closest that you can come to the great art designs of the good- girl art into the seventies. The entire run is hard to find in high grade.

Time Warp #1

Another great design by Kaluta. Packed with every thing a cover should have. He uses every space on this piece. The whole cover is very detailed and sets the mood and gets eye contact from side to side. I would like to have a poster of this cover.

Batman Family #17

It was perfectly spaced, but not as detailed as most of Kaluta's cover work. It was fairly simple, but smooth, and did not crowd the page. Any collector who has given this cover a detailed look can spot it displayed across a convention room.

JIM CAMPOS

I think it would be easier to list the five "worst" covers of all-time, than the five best. There are so many great covers. The five I have listed I have picked because of their eye appeal - not for any significant contribution to the history of comics. They just look great, pure and simple. I'd love to have these displayed in my home.

Fighting American #1

(Simon & Kirby)-The bounding thief literally "flies" off the cover.

Phantom Lady #17

(Matt Baker)-Most striking "good girl" cover ever.

Blue Bolt #105

(L.B. Cole)-Fantastic covers on the theme of man, woman & evil monster.

Son of Sinbad

(Jack Kirby)-Like Blue Bolt, a wonderful rendering of human forms with beautiful colors.

Mystery In Space #90

(Infantino & Anderson)-Adam Strange in a weird, almost dreamlike state, floating between Earth and Rann against a black & starry background.

TIM HESSEE

Jimmy Olsen #63

"The League of Fantastic Supermen! Five miniature Supermen from Krypton: Red Kryptonite ray guns! Unbound! Super-powers! Superman robots, under command of Jimmy Olsen! Is this great or what?"

Adventure #294

"Halloween Pranks of the Bizarro-Supermen! Bizarros as Presidents Kennedy, Jerry Lewis, and Marilyn Monroe! Who's behind all this stuff? I know. Most wicked!"

Superman #147

A take-off of Adventure #247's first Legion cover story. The Legion of Super-Villains hold Superman hostage and tell him via Lex Luthor's threatening, "Superman, as punishment for your many brave and worthy deeds, we vote that you be executed!" Do villains talk like that anymore?

House of Mystery #137

As three miners work underground, one exclaims, "The tunnel's nearly finished! Another few feet and we'll shake hands with Eddie and his men." Unfortunately Eddie and his men are now huge

orange one-eyed beaked monsters! This cover is as vivid in my mind today as it was in 1964.

Adventure #332

"Initiation of Proty II." The Legion of Super Pets cover story. Can you name the other four members without looking?

CRAIG DELICH

The Human Torch #5

(Fall, 1941 Battle issue) I could say "nuff said," but artistically it has to rank near the very top in beauty. After all my years of collecting, it is hard to beat certain Golden Age covers for sheer beauty and this is one of 'em.

Marvel Mystery #9

A Schomburg masterpiece! Some covers, like this, could realistically be called "crowded." But Schomburg makes it work.

Hit Comics #5

Louis K. Fine... what can you say about his art except he gave a sense of line, power, grace and sheer "Rembrandt" beauty to this masterpiece of Golden Age art. WOW!

Superman #14

Underrated Fred Ray masterpiece. This single illustration in color says really artistically what Superman is all about. In my opinion, Fred Ray and Jack Burnley were the best artists of the Golden Age Superman, and this Ray piece will stand the test of time against ANY Golden Age cover.

Flash Comics #37

Shelly Moldoff's striking hawks with Hawkman and Hawkgirl is another masterpiece. Here's a cover you could mount in a frame and put on an art gallery wall. It just reeks of excitement. This cover ranks right along side with Mac Raboy's famous Captain Marvel Jr. cover with the Blue Warrior diving with a Bald Eagle.

Well, that's it. I purposely did not list CLASSIC covers, like Superman #1, Batman #1, etc. They're good, no doubt about it. But, after many years of collecting, I've gotten to the place where I appreciate beauty, style and grace, and these covers certainly have that...and more!!!

MARGARET AYERS

Ripley's Believe It Or Not "True Ghost Stories"

(Golden Press, 1979.) These ghost stories were very entertaining and the cover art was spooky.

The Death of Superman

(DC, 1993)-This comic is a collector item. The cover contained excellent artwork; it made you feel as though you witnessed the battle of Doomsday and Superman.

Archie Americana Series" Best of the 60's"

Archive Publications, 1991 It was a teenager in the '60s and this cover is very nostalgic to me.

Uncle Scrooge: "Son of a Sun"

Gladstone, March 1986 This is the finest cover art work of Don Rosa, my favorite current comic strip/comics artist. My all time favorite is Carl Barks.

Bonanza (Gold Key, Sept 1963)

This cover had an excellent close-up of "Little Joe." Michael Landon was my late highschool buddy. The cover will really keep his memory alive.

HUGH O'KENNON

New York World's Fair, 1940

This is my #1 favorite for reasons explained in the introductory article I wrote for the article on Jack Burnley in the Golden Age Quarterly.

Silver Streak #6

©Harry A. Chesler

The early Silver Streak comics apparently never made it to Mr. Swanson's store because I don't ever remember seeing any of them. When I saw #6, I was bowled over by the amazing Jack Cole cover of the Claw. To me this was an amazing comic book cover, and the stories inside were all classics, especially the Claw story. This cover remains to this day, a quintessential comic book cover.

Action #1

When I was a small boy growing up in a small town during the depression, there was not much to do for entertainment. However, my father had a Sunday ritual of going by bus downtown and buying several out-of-town newspapers. He would bring them home and the whole family would spend a good part of the day reading them. I, of course, devoured the comic strips. One day he took me with him downtown to the newsstand, and told me I could buy one comic book and to pick one out from the large display of books. I had previously seen Popular Comics, King Comics and the like, but when I saw a comic with a man holding up a car over his head and dressed in a strange costume, there was no question about which book I wanted. Of course, the book was Action #1 and it began my long addiction to Superman.

Special Edition #1 (Captain Marvel)

By the time this book came out, I had already become a fan of Capt. Marvel. My practice was to take a hard earned dime to Mr. Swanson's drugstore and stand at the comic book rack and read as many books as possible. Mr. Swanson would patiently let me read for fifteen or twenty minutes and then tell me it was time to buy a book. On the particular day, the first book I saw was Special Edition #1. I was greatly intrigued by the concept behind Capt. Marvel, and to find a whole book of his adventures was a great surprise. I was so surprised in fact, that I bought the book without looking at any others, so anxious was I to get home and read it carefully. I'll bet Mr. Swanson was surprised also.

Wonderworld

Any Wonderworld comic with a cover by Lou Fine. Wonderworld comics were apparently not well distributed, at least in my hometown. I had to ride my bike or walk several miles downtown to a large newsstand to find them, and even then I was not always successful. Next to the great Jack Burnley, I consider Lou Fine to be the best cover artist of the Golden Age. Any time I could get my hands on a Wonderworld comic was a day worth remembering. They are all great, so pick a number.

STEPHEN B. KEISMAN

I made a list of hundreds and it was the toughest thing to select only five from it, but here goes.

Daredevil Battles Hitler

The "ultimate Real" time villain! The penetrating eyes of Hitler circa!

Silver Streak #6

The ultimate villain cover!

Master #21

Raboy's best. Gorgeous color and anatomy!

Captain America #1

Earliest Hitler cover!

Young Allies #1

Babies with action and movement!

STEPHEN H. GENTNER

My top 5 choices for covers go in order of preference:

Atom #7

Seven Seas #6

Startling #49

Captain America #37

Fight #35

5 FAVE COVERS SURVEY

MICHAEL LEON

Captain America #139

When I first became a comic book collector in 1970, Captain America #139 was one of the first comic books that I ever had. In my formative years as a comic collector, I often wondered why that Bucky Barnes robot on the cover says, "I've Waited 20 Years To Do This!" I later learned that the real Bucky Barnes was killed in an airplane explosion, so that's why Captain America was quite surprised to see whom he thought to be Bucky, after all these years since the end of WWII.

Amazing Spider-Man #41

It's one of my favorite covers because the Rhino dominates the cover with his smashing and hulking to get through a wall while Spider-Man lies helplessly on the ground behind the Rhino. I also like the issue because it is the first appearance and origin of the Rhino.

Green Lantern #4

(2nd Series-Silver Age) I've loved how the Green Lantern is flying high in the sky above a bridge, which looks like the Brooklyn bridge, while avoiding a missile (with a mind of its own) aimed to kill him. This is the most adventurous Silver Age Green Lantern cover I've ever seen.

The Flash #131

(1st Series-Silver Age) This is a high octane adventurous (Kirby) cover which I think is very exciting. A flying saucer emanates the Flash (Barry Allen) in a yellow magnetic beam high in the sky. The Green Lantern (Hal Jordan) sees this and tries to free the Flash from the yellow beam with his power ring. But his power ring is ineffective against that which is colored yellow.

Thor #151

The cover has me on the edge of my seat. Thor vs. The Destroyer. The cover is a close-up shot of Thor swinging his Uru hammer while The Destroyer is standing in a battle pose with his fists clenched. Thor and The Destroyer are standing on a New York city street with buildings in the background of the cover. The ground that they are standing on is strewn with rubble and debris.

MICHAEL NAIMAN

My favorite five are

Four Color #386

"Only A Poor Old Man" (March 1952) Carl Barks' amazing ability to tell a story in one panel is evident on this cover. The attention to detail and amaze-mindedness of Scrooge McDuck, the resourcefulness and ingenuity of Huey, Dewey and Louie and the "everyman" struggle of Donald against seemingly impossible situations. Put them all together in a money lake and you have it all!

Reform School Girl

(1951) published by Avon. Can you visualize finding this book under your child's bed? Every parent's nightmare! As it says on the cover "...the story of youth gone wrong." Didn't we all want to see how far we could "push the envelope" as we experimented with life's boundaries? This is the girl you want to bring home to Mom and Dad!

Amazing Spider-Man #98

(September 1965) The eye-popping line drawings on the black background together with the Rembrandt-esque golden glow of Molten Man burns this image forever on the brain.

Walt Disney's Comics and Stories #161

(February 1954) I'll never forget reading this on the occasion of my first "sleepover". We stayed at my cousin's house on New Years Eve before attending the Rose Parade of 1959. I found this issue in the stack of comics. At the time I was an enthusiastic young stamp collector. I believe that this cover touches that secret fear in all collectors. What happens when that unexpected calamity occurs when you are in the midst of remembering? Once again, Barks is right on the money.

Classics Illustrated #124

(January 1955) "War of the Worlds." I'll never forget being scared out of my young brain while watching George Pal's 1953 classic flick at the Academy theater on Saturday afternoon. Whenever I gaze at the cover of this comic, it instantaneously transports me back to that emptiness of a Saturday and the lazy, lost afternoons of childhood.

JOE RAINONE

Here's my top five choices (I wish you gave ten!). These covers stand out to me in my opinion they represent some of the best that comics art has to offer!

Suspense #3

(April 1964) Evening covers! Hoo, I still Chic's worst nightmare! The scary thing is, that the situation depicted here could really happen! Maybe to you or your

Detective #35

(January 1940) Pencilled in the nick of time! Good vs. Evil, mad scientist and the Avengers! If Batman had been a pulp hero, this could have been a typical cover motif. (Commissioner Gordon Death in Lurid Lives Doctor Death-The 9 Riveting Murders!)

Phantom Lady #17

(April 1948) This is the ultimate bondage cover which typifies the whole genre...Bewitching! Looks straight at you...the reader. But who was looking at her eyes?!

Marvel Mystery #9

(July 1941) The classic Golden Age cover! King Kong had nothing on them! Fire vs. Water! The Powerful and the Helpless!

Web of Evil #5

(July 1953) How could anyone have resisted this one if it comes to life! Almost appears 3-D. Life over Death! Evil incarnate!

LEWIS FORRO

Amazing Spider-Man #33

(February 1966) This book is the conclusion of the famous Master Planner trilogy. I had read a few Spider-Man comics previously but my sporadic 11 year old brain was so transfixed by Spider-Man #32 that #33 became the first Marvel comic I remember waiting for. I can still remember that little tingle of excitement when, after a month's wait, I saw the cover of #33 gleaming at me from the comics rack of my neighborhood 7-11 store in Savannah, Georgia back in 1966. This cover isn't as exciting as several of the Ditko Spider-Man covers including the dynamic #32. It shows just a forlorn Spidey waiting to die as he is trapped beneath the massive chunk of equipment, but its basic simplicity instantly focuses your attention. Even after 30 years of hindsight, for my money, Spider-Man #32 and #33 are the most dramatically satisfying of the Lee-Ditko Spider-Man efforts and their covers do them justice.

Fantastic Four #48

(March 1966) Another great cover from the halcyon days of 1966. Marvel frequently used covers with graduated tone backgrounds in those days but this one looks especially nice. Usually when Marvel introduced a new villain or character he was pictured on the cover. For instance, prior to #48 only two Fantastic Four issues (#7 and #99) failed to show the villain on the cover. The irony here is that Fantastic Four #48 introduces two characters that became two of the biggest players in Marvel history and neither one of them is pictured on the cover!

Interesting side-bar: the Watcher was known to be one of the most powerful creatures in the Marvel Universe. In all previous cover appearances he looked regally impassive. His apprehensive look on this cover had this reader wondering what could be dangerous enough to worry the Watcher?

Tale of Suspense #2

(March 1959)-This beautiful cover is by far the best of the small handful of covers that Steve Ditko did for the "pre-Marvels." It also compares favorably with his best Charlton covers from the 1950s. Ditko frequently used window panes as framing devices and futuristic city sky-lines on interior stories but not too often on covers. Thankfully he used both here to wonderful effect. I bought this book in 1979 at a comic show in San Francisco for a whopping $30.00. Even with some spine wear its still a high grade copy and I haven't been able to find a better one since. Whenever I show this book to someone who hasn't seen it before their jaw always drops a little bit. So did mine the first time.

Strange Tales #79

(December 1960)-Maybe I shouldn't put two pre-Marvels on a list of only five favorite covers, but I especially like those books so what the heck. Whenever I'm thumbing through a stack of pre-Marvels this one stops me and demands an extra look. The simple composition, the dark blue sky with the green and yellow monster give this pre-Marvel book one of the more striking covers. Notice how that single eye peering over the ridge dominates the entire cover. Art critics can file this one away as one of the better Jack Kirby/Steve Ditko creations.

Science Fiction Space Adv. #11

(May-June 1954)-If some Ditko covers make your jaw drop, this one makes your head spin. Issues #10 and #12 of this title also have incredible Ditko covers but the colors on this one are more vibrant. I first saw these three books on a trip to Redbeard's Book Den in Southern California in 1982. Seeing them all at once was quite a shock since I didn't know Ditko had even worked at Charlton, except for the Blue Beetle. Ditko did lots of underwater covers and stories at Charlton and this is one of his best. The subtle blue and yellow shading in the background frequently don't come through when this cover is reprinted. Take a look a Weird Science Fantasy #23 published a few months earlier and see if Ditko borrowed some of this cover from Wally Wood.

L. THOMAS

These are not the big No. 1's, not the hottest keys, nor thousand dollar books, yet they're my favorite covers:

Showcase #26

(DC) Did aliens visit and influence ancient times? Well yes they did, its right here in my Showcase #26. Rip Hunter and Kubert, WOW!

Com. Battle & the Atomic Sub #1

(ACG) Atomic submarine, spaceships and 3-D effect, yikes!! Mr. Moldoff would you please make more like this?

Magnus Robot Fighter 4000 A.D. #13

(Gold Key) You had to love Magnus as much as I did, but I could stare at this cover all day. Color choices, Leeja in the background...Mr. Manning was great and so was S.A. Magnus!

Strange Adventures #9

(DC) I go back to look at this one all the time. This is Mr. Kane, isn't it? (I should know, sorry.) The "Black" cover, Capt. Comet — "Zowie"!!

G.I. Combat #12

(DC) Well there has to be a "Big Five" in the bunch. It could have been #91 or #108, or any of the classic "washtones". "The Haunted Tank" always did the impossible, but the covers; "Look Out"!! (112, 91, 108 are not washtones.) How on Earth will they survive? I couldn't wait to turn the pages and find out; Mr. Kubert peaks!

DEAN WONG

Detective Comics #31

The classic Batman cover of all time. An absolutely unforgettable cover utilizing the caped crusader. The castle on the hill, and the moon, to create the perfect dark moody setting for Batman in the pre-Robin days. The way that all Batman covers should have been done.

Superman Comics #14

This Superman shield cover is the pinnacle of all patriotic covers. An absolutely stunning black cover beauty which no true collector would ever be able to pass up if seen in high grade. Now I know why black cover books are so popular.

Silver Streak #6

The rare and classic claw cover by Jack Cole. A powerful illustration by Jack Cole giving the viewer an absolute sense of terror and helplessness. I find it hard to believe that I have picked a book with a yellow cover, since they seem to be so common, and yellow must be the blandest color of all time.

Adventure Comics #73

The first DC cover by Simon & Kirby. Beautiful use of red and green colors and artistic perspective to make it seem as if the Manhunter is actually stepping out of the cover. The photo-journal guide does no justice to this gorgeous cover when compared to a real-life high grade glossy copy of this book.

Punch Comics #12

The classic skull cover book. Another black cover beauty with a little bit of everything including a shoot-out and a damsel in distress all encapsulated within a giant sized skull. Don't even need the glow-in-the-dark feature for this cover to scare the daylights out of you.

GEORGE A. KOPA

Superman #14

Symbolizes for me, the spirit of the character as an original American icon.

Captain America #13

Classic WWII cover with an incredibly detailed background of Pearl Harbor.

Adventure #46

Great classic rendition of the Golden Age Sandman by Craig Flessel. Simple lines and terrific eye appeal.

Flash Comics #103

Mystical quality portrayed by a Golden Scimitar hanging over Keystone City and a larger than life Flash reaching to capture it.

Suspense Comics #3

Schomburg cover depicting the KKK, bondage, and a mystical setting. Explosive!

BILL HOWARD

Choosing the 5 greatest covers is a little like deciding on your favorite dessert. It depends on your mood, and is guaranteed to change. With that in mind, from the home office in San Francisco, here is my top 5 list:

Startling Comics #49

Schomburg, damsel in distress, robot. Need I say more? The best cover of all time. Period.

All Star Comics #33

Solomon Grundy! Justice Society of America! Every time I pick it up, I stare. For a long time.

Captain Marvel Jr. #4 or Master Comics #27

A toss up. The penultimate Mac Raboy covers. No top 5 list would be complete without a Raboy.

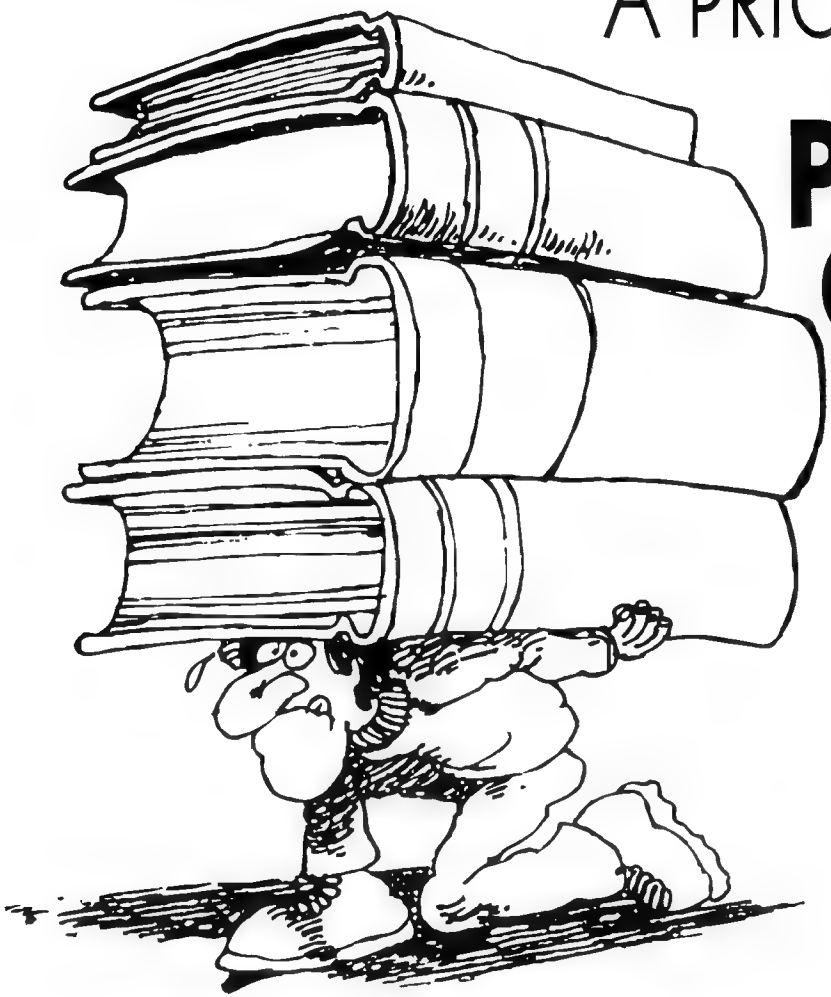
Avengers #4

Wow! Kirby's revival of Cap positively EXPLODES off the page. Thirty years later, it still sends shivers down my spine.

Famous Funnies #211

Forget his oils, I think it's the comic stuff that made Frazetta great. And, with a nod to Buster Crabbe #5, Flash Gordon is the best of the lot. ■

A PRICE GUIDE *for* Price Guides *1995*



"Those old Overstreet's are worth more than you think..."

by Gary M. Carter

Back in CBM #2 (March/April, 1991) and CBM #16 (August, 1992) we listed the market values for back issue *Overstreet Price Guides*. Ever since then a mountain of requests have come in asking for an updated version of "Price Guide for Price Guides". So, at long last, here it is. The data has been compiled from documented sales figures, catalogs, and input from expert dealers and collectors from around the US and Canada. Please note that the first price is for Good condition, the second for Fine, and the third for Near Mint.

ABBREVIATIONS:

CF	=	**cover feature**
cvr	=	**cover**
NN	=	**no number**
nv	=	**no value**
?	=	**value unknown**
SC	=	**soft cover**
HD	=	**hard cover**
LB	=	**leather bound**
cp	=	**cover price**
Can.	=	**Canadian**
ed.	=	**edition**

NN (#1) - SADDLE STITCH FORMAT
CF: Misc. comic book publisher's logos

White cvr 1st Edition (1970) Rare	$200	$1,000	$2,000
Blue cvr (1971, reprint w/ some corrections)	$150	$750	$1,500

NN (#2, 1972)
CF: Comics with American flag covers

SC (May Binding)	$55	$275	$550
SC (June Binding)	$55	$275	$550
HD (blue cvr, interior SC present) Very Rare	$225	$1,125	$2,250
HD (blue cvr, no interior SC present) Very Rare	$225	$1,125	$2,250

NN (#3, 1973)
CF: Comics with Christmas cvrs

SC	$35	$175	$350
HD (blue cvr) Very Rare	$180	$900	$1,800

NN (#4, 1974)
CF: Justice Society of America
Cvr Artist: Don Newton

SC	$10	$50	$100
SC (Can. Ed.)	$15	$75	$150
HD	$18	$70	$1800

NN (#5, 1975)
CF: ERB's Tarzan
Cvr Artist: Joe Kubert

SC	$20	$100	$200
SC (Can ed., $6.95 cp)	$30	$150	$300
HD Scarce	$30	$200	$450
Linen Cvr Finish Stock (Can. ed., $8.95 cp) Scarce	value unknown		

#6 (1976)
Cvr feature: The Spirit
Cvr Artist: Will Eisner

SC	$5	$30	$60
HD	$10	$50	$100
LB (one copy bound)	value unknown		

#7 (1977)
CF: Porky Pig, RCMP & Friends
Cvr Artist: Carl Barks

SC (Hard to find)	$15	$75	$140
HD (Scarce)	$20	$100	$225

Secret confessions of a Price Guide collector

BY JACK MALLETTE

It happens to everyone, I suppose, at least once in their life. You're cruising along with nary a care in the world, secure in the knowledge that everything is in its proper place, that life has reached that special cosmic balance that we so seldom enjoy, and then WHAM-O! POW, right in the kisser, and you never even saw it coming! Blindsided right out of the blue, and there's no turning back the clock. Your existence has been irrevocably altered.

I saw it happen to two friends of mine once, and I'm afraid I was the cause of it. I was traveling to Knoxville, Tennessee, to spend an afternoon treasure-hunting at the Knoxville Flea Market with Jon Warren and Bob Overstreet, back when such things were possible, and we were feeling that buzz of giddy anticipation that all collectors feel when the game is afoot.

I had long felt (and still feel to this day) that there is no more comprehensive information/pricing guide, nor any greater labor of love, than the Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide... and I'd been working on completing a Near Mint set of all variations for some time.

Sitting in the passenger seat in front of me was the creator of this series of books, and driving the car was Jon Warren, the first person to realize significant prices for early Overstreet guides.

I innocently volunteered that I had been the successful bidder for a set of three NM early Overstreets, a white cover #1, a hard cover #2, and a soft cover #2 and #3. The soft cover number 2 and 3 weren't especially scarce at that time (1984), but the #1 had proven to be quite elusive, and I was feeling very proud.

Jon and Bob exchanged knowing glances, and I interpreted the half-smile on Bob's face as one of well-deserved pride. I'm sure that even he never expected early versions of his book to be as eagerly sought-after as the comics that they documented.

"How much did they set you back?" asked Bob. "Sixteen hundred," I replied matter-of-factly.

I thought that Jon was going to wreck the car! He turned completely around, stuck his face squarely into mine, and exclaimed "HOW MUCH?" Bob also turned completely around, and his mouth was open, too, only he was speechless.

"Uh, sixteen hundred, " I repeated, feeling like a rube who had missed the punch line of a joke.

They exchanged glances again, only this time there was something else there- uncertainty, surely, but perhaps even fear, and I suddenly realized that they were the ones who had been left out.

I assured them that it was probably a fluke, an anomaly, hey, it was an auction, right? All it takes is two eager bidders who want the same thing...

The "stair step" effect

As demand gradually increased for the Guide, Bob increased the number of copies printed; hence, the "stair step" effect of overstock, sellout, overstock, sellout, etc. There are only two significant sellouts of note; #5 and #7, and both were spurred along by the popularity of their featured subjects. Issue #5 is the Edgar Rice Burroughs issue, while #7 is the issue with Carl Barks' Porky Pig cover, which hit the stands right during the peak of the Disney/Barks mania.

Hardbacks of both #5 and #7 were difficult to find even then... today high grade copies of these two hard-to-find books command serious dollars. To a lesser extent, #9 & #10 also fall into this category.

The creme de la creme, however, are the first edition #1s ("White Cover") and the second edition #1s ("Blue Cover")... and the #2 and #3 hardbacks. All four are now ultra scarce, in high demand, and cost serious dollars.

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PRICE GUIDE COLLECTOR

continued from page 65

Lurking in the back stock If you know what you are looking for, you may find a great deal lurking in the back stock of a used book or magazine store... or even auction houses. When I found my #3 hardback, for example, I was able to get it for a "song" (relatively speaking) because Wooley's auction had incorrectly labeled it as "defective". They believed it to be defective because it had no interior "soft cover" inside its hardcover binding (as the #2 did). Apparently few were aware that this was how Bob purposefully produced it.

"Information is priceless" they say, and it is precisely this kind of information, available in magazines such as Comic Book Marketplace that is the most beneficial to collectors and fans.

Variations On A Theme During my years of researching back issues of the Price Guide, I've discovered several interesting variations (some that even Bob Overstreet was unaware of).

For instance, it now appears that there were two variations of the most valuable and elusive book of all, the #2 hardback. The gold-foil stamping on the front cover and the spine is different, while the most readily identifiable difference is inside the back cover.

The "first state" variation says "Southern Bound May, 1972" while the "second state" variation says "Southern Bound, June, 1972." Both inscriptions are in a small oval binder's stamp.

Canadian Editions Canadian editions of the soft backs also exist for #'s 3, 4 and 5, and are easily identifiable because they are thinner, have no interior ad sections, and have a blank back cover. The reason for removing the ads (according to Bob) was that some contained prices in US dollars, which didn't translate to Canadian.

The most unusual "Canadian variation" of all seems to be the Canadian edition of #5 soft back with the $8.95 cover price (instead of the normal $6.95), and the linen-finish cover stock. I've only found one, and when I showed it to Bob, he was as perplexed as I was regarding its origin.

Leather-bound Editions. The leather-bound limited editions started in 1984 with issue #14, and the reason that edition has 101 signed and numbered copies, instead of the advertised 100 is rather bizarre, but can certainly be understood by other collectors.

I had originally chosen #10 in the edition to be the copy I had my name imprinted on every year, and I also purchased #100, just to have the key, and final number in the series.

Imagine my surprise and consternation when my copies arrived in the mail and I discovered that the edition had grown to 101! According to Bob, he and Steve Geppi had been at an impasse in a substantial toys-for-toys deal when Steve hit upon the solution to have Bob give him the final number of each leather bound series.

"Someone already has it...??" "No problem, we'll just raise the edition size. Presto, change-o, 101 leather bounds!

#13 Leather-bound Prototype I did find some solace in the fact that I had already acquired two other jewels from Bob, including one of the only two 1983 leather-bound prototypes.

It seems in preparation for the #14 leather-bound edition, the printer bound two copies of #13, complete with a gold-foil stamp "13" on the spine. One copy has Bob Overstreet's name on the front cover, and I acquired the other. The printer also put a "gilt edge" on one of the two copies, and Bob was nice enough to send it my way.

For me, the fun of the hobby has always been the thrill of the chase. We are, after all, merely custodians of our treasures for a short while, and part of the joy is (or should be), in seeing others share that same feeling. Like watching our children grow, I think it helps (in some way) to validate our existence. But that doesn't mean that if I'm at a show and I see a run of "gem-dandy" mint early Overstreets at a good price... I won't snap them up in a New York minute!

You can bet your spa-fon on that one! Thanks for reading and good luck to all back issue Overstreet collectors. ■

SOME FINAL THOUGHTS:

Relating White To Blue - Even though 1000 of the White #1s were printed and only 800 Blue, owner reports indicate that the Blue editions have "out lived" the white editions by a ratio of approximately 6 to 1 (based on reports).

This is actually logical when you consider that the White #1 edition was probably handled very roughly by the dealers who originally ordered them in the early days. When their first copy was literally worn out, many reordered and received the Blue #1 edition as their second copy (which was usually saved). That's the story told by many of the folks who actually ordered one of each color.

The White #1s availability is still far lower than collector demand. This little gem is sure to be on a lot of collector's want lists in years to come (the Blue #1 as well).

The #2 Hard Cover - As the hobby of comic book collecting continues to mature, the collector/researcher interest in back issue Overstreets will no doubt continue. And with only 75 copies in existence the #2 hard cover will likely continue to outdistance the pack at a very rapid rate.

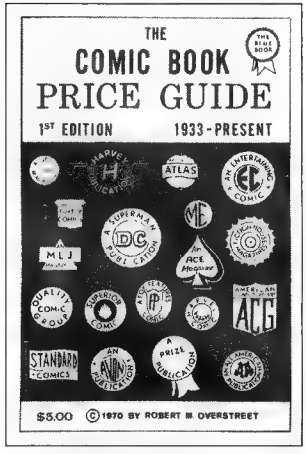
#8 (1978)			
CF: Women in comics			
Cvr Artist: Bill Ward			
SC	$5	$25	$50
HD	$8	$40	$80
LB (one copy bound)	?	?	?
#9 (1979)			
CF: EC Science fiction			
Cvr Artist: Wally Wood			
SC	$6	$30	$60
HD	$15	$60	$125
#10 (1980)			
CF: Timely WW II Super Heroes			
Cvr Artist: Alex Schomburg			
SC	$5	$30	$60
HD	$12	$55	$120
#11 (1981)			
CF: 1950s Horror			
Cvr Artist: L. B. Cole			
SC	$5	$25	$50
HD	$8	$40	$80
#12 (1982)			
CF: Alfred E. Neuman and B.Overstreet			
Cvr Artist: Norman Mingo			
SC	nv	$10	$20
HD	$5	$20	$40

Even if ALL the copies originally printed were still in existence, it would still be quite scarce and a "sure bet" for future investment.

The "Barks" #7 Soft & Hard Cover -
The story goes like this: Bob Overstreet slightly over-ordered #6 and so at the end of the year was left with a small surplus. To ensure that this would not happen again, he ordered less of the #7. This turned out to be less than he needed, to fill all of the orders. There is already an acute shortage of this issue which seems to be getting more severe with each passing year. Especially the hard cover edition!

The "Batman" #19 Soft & Hard Cover -
Not surprising, it's that darn Batman cover that has made this issue (that would otherwise be in ample supply) in higher demand and harder to locate than one would imagine. Amazingly high demand for this one, and in so short a time. Holy Price Guides Batman!

Keep A Sharp Eye Peeled, Matey - A number of issues have surfaced recently that, on first inspection, look flawless. Regrettably, some of the ad pages in the front and back ad wells have been neatly torn out, leaving a small "page remnant".



Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide #1 (White Cover) © R. M. Overstreet

Unscrupulous sellers have used a razor blade or exacto knife to take out this remnant so as to make the missing page almost invisible. Although the missing ads are interesting I suppose, no copies have been identified with pricing information pages removed.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE
The White #1, the Blue #1, the hard cover #2, or the hardback #3 are in heavy demand in spite of their hefty prices... and it doesn't look like it's slowing down. When there is only 75 of a key comic related item (e.g. #2 Hard back) with very few high grade specimens surviving, the result is a very low risk investment.

Hard backs of #5 and #7 continue to escalate and look fairly inexpensive when compared with the above. The few really high grade copies around are becoming elusive and being absorbed in to collections quite rapidly., and are suffering a steadily declining availability.

Other ("non-Overstreet") price guides continue to be the focus of increasing demand. Check future issues of CBM for an updated price listing of these "oddities".

If you have additional information, documentaion, or opinions about back issue price guides, write care of this magazine. ■

Special thanks to Jack Mallette and Michael Naiman for information and data... and to all the dealers and collectors who contributed information.

#13 (1983)
CF: DC Heroes infinity cover
Cvr Artists: Newton & Rubenstein

SC	nv	$10	$20
HD	$5	$15	$30
LB (2 copies bound, one with gilt edge)			
Extremely Rare	?	?	?

#14 (1984)
CF: Katy Keene
Cvr Artist: Bill Woggon

SC	nv	$5	$15
HD	nv	$15	$30
LB (Scarce)	?	$150	$300

#15 (1985)
CF: Fawcett Marvel Family
Cvr Artist: C.C. Beck

SC	nv	$5	$15
HD	nv	$15	$30
Unnumbered Proof	?	?	$200
LB (Scarce)	?	$125	$250

#16 (1986)
CF: Marvel Silver Age heroes
Cvr Artist: John Romita, Sr.

SC	nv	$5	$15
HD	nv	$15	$30
LB (Scarce)	?	$100	$225
Scarce			

#17 (1987)
CF: Snow White & Disney Friends
Cvr Artist: Ron Dias

SC	nv	$5	$15
HD	nv	$15	$45
LB (Scarce)	?	$100	$225

#18 (1988)
CF: Superman, Man of Tomorrow
Cvr Artist: L. B. Cole

SC	nv	$5	$15
HD	nv	$15	$30
LB (Scarce)	?	$100	$200

#19 (1989)
CF: Batman, Robin, & the Joker
Cvr Artist: Jerry Robinson

SC (High demand)	$5	$15	$30
HD (High demand)	$5	$25	$50
LB (Scarce)	?	$100	$225

#20 (1990)
CF: Justice League of America (Infantino & Anderson)

SC	nv	$5	$15
HD	nv	$15	$30
LB (Scarce)	?	$100	$200

#21 (1991)
CF: Timely WWII Super Heroes
Cvr Artist: Alex Schomburg

SC	nv	nv	$15
HD	nv	$10	$25
LB (Scarce)	?	$100	$200

#22 (1992)
CF: Spider-Man & Green Goblin
Cvr Artists: John Romita, Sr. & Mark Bagley

SC	nv	nv	$15
HD	nv	$10	$25

#23 (1993)
CF: GA & SA Flash and GA & SA Green Lantern
Cvr Artists: Carmine Infantino & Terry Austin

SC	nv	nv	$15
HD	nv	$10	$25

#24 (1994)
CF: X-Men
Cvr Artists: (Wiacek, Parobeck, Tiffany, & Balaban)

SC	nv	nv	$15
HD	nv	$10	$25

THE MATT SCHIFFMAN REPORT

"Overly Enthusiastic Competitive Behavior"

The one good thing about Monday is Monday evening. After a day that has usually done its best to throw me, I look forward to relaxing and watching the A&E's Sherlock Holmes and Lovejoy Mystery Theater, and, if I am in luck, reading the latest CBM. Anyway, the other night on Lovejoy, an episode entitled "Lovejoy Loses It" was featured. The whole point of the story was that Lovejoy, who is portrayed as an "antiques diva", became so obsessed with his next financial windfall, he loses his true love of antiques and their value for beauty's sake alone.

To remedy his ailment and "reset" his balance, he visits an old and washed-up diva who becomes so greedy he literally "cracked-up". In light of the recent **"overly enthusiastic competitive behavior"** (I'm being polite) I've seen recently in fandom, I've developed a short list of "washed-up collectors" for those of us to visit if we ever succumb to this tragic malady. Pat Calhoun's quote comes to mind here... "let's not forget why we collected comic books in the first place ..."

Case in point - Wonder Con. We've all seen footage from 1987 "Black Monday" at the New York Stock Exchange. Several times at Wonder I felt like I was on the floor of the Exchange with all the **"overly enthusiastic competitive behavior"** (still being polite).

Like many collectors, on occasion I've personally felt a bit frustrated when I've tried to sell books to some of the top dealers. So it was a real pleasure to see them actually lined up to pay high prices for Golden Age books. I probably shouldn't say so in public, but I must admit I was amused as I watched a number of them bicker and argue for the "privilege" of buying material.

Some of the acquisitional methodology that is symptomatic of this **"overly enthusiastic competitive behavior"** (hey, I can't help it if I'm polite) was quite creative. Grab a stack of books you MIGHT want and take them down to the end of the display table and VERY SLOWLY peruse each item. Then wait until someone becomes extremely impatient while you go through "your" stack, and then "sell" them an option to look at or perhaps buy the book. This is an interesting technique, especially when you consider that the person "selling" the purchase options does not even own the books!

I wonder if I'm the only one who looks forward to the return of civility and courtesy in our hobby. A few "old time" hobbyists have told me stories of the days when collectors shared and actually helped each other find needed comics. Can you imagine such a thing? Maybe what we need is a new 12 step program for (dare I say it) **"overly enthusiastic competitive behavior"** in comic collectors!

Elsewhere on the Golden Age front- just this past month I've been approached with three Captain America #1's for sale. One was priced at Guide, and the other two are looking for 1.5 times Guide, but only in trade. I've also seen two others for sale out in the market. Can we make the assumption that there are more Cap #1s out there than the 180 total copies estimated in Overstreet? I don't think so. The market has been clamoring for this book over the past year, and collectors have enjoyed 60% - 70% increases over the past two years. Some have seen this as an opportunity to let a few go at a great profit, and perhaps trade for more undervalued GA material.

Recent Golden Age sales: Buzz Sawyer #1 (Mile High) VF/NM $250; Human Torch #12 VF $550; Sub-Mariner #1 FN+ $5,200; Phantom Lady #16 VF/NM $1,100; Captain Marvel Jr. #1 VF++ $3,800; All Select #2 VF- $650; All-American #17 G $2,000; Four Color #17 VG+ $225; Fighting Yank #15 VF+ $320; and Detective #27 app VG/FN $62,000.

The New Deal - I've noticed a reversal

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MARKET REPORTS

NICK KRONFELD
West Hartford, Connecticut

The comic market continues to amaze me as it sets records almost daily. It seems to be a very healthy market, because good books are getting very rare and there is extremely strong demand for them. As of this writing, I can only think of one Detective #27 on the market and no Action #1's, but the number of requests for these books stays strong.

Golden Age is still the most popular area by far. There is no way I can fill all the requests that I get for books from this era. Most requested: Mystery Men Comics #1, pre-Robin Detectives (also pre-Batman), Captain America Comics #74, Terrific Comics #5, and, everyone's favorite, Suspense Comics #3.

Sales: Action Comics #5 VG/FN $4,400, #5 FR/GD $1,250, #13 VG- $1,200, #23 VG $1,100, #38 VF+ $825; All-Star Comics #3 FN (Restored) $4,500, #3 FN (Restored) $4,000; Comic Cavalcade #1 VG- $1,100; Detective Comics #32 VG/FN $1,900, #38 VF (Restored) $8,000; Famous Funnies #2 VG- $1,200; Human Torch #2 (#1) VG- $2,500; Mickey Mouse Magazine Vol. I/#1 FR $1,000; More Fun Comics #9 FN (Heavily restored) $1,700; New York World's Fair 1939 GD $1,900, 1940 VG $3,000; Planet Comics #1 VG- $1,700; World's Best Comics #1 VG $2,100.

Acquisitions: Action #1 (unrestored copy); #5 FN, #6 FN; Phantom Lady #13, 16, & 17 (all FN/VF); Batman #1 VF- (Restored); More Fun Comics #11 (VF), and others.

That's all for this month. In closing, I am looking forward to the Sotheby's Auction followed by an exciting summer season. Hopefully we can get some keys at the auction, but with the record prices being set I'm sure there'll be some intensive bidding!

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SCHIFFMAN REPORT

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of roles over the last six months at conventions around the country Before, a national dealer would set up a table with material purchased over the year, and sell at high prices Now, private collectors set up a table with high prices, and let the dealers (many of whom no longer set up a table) battle it out to purchase their books.

Each week we see more and more auctions being held throughout the fan press. So far, collectors have not begun to tire of this format. A few successful results are: New York World's Fair 1940 app VG $2,400; Phantom Lady #13 VF+ $2,100; Punch #1 FN $520; Spy Smasher #1 GD $312; and The Green Mask #1 FN/VF $680.

So far these auctions have offered many "great" books that are not available to mainstream collectors. These auction books are also often realizing multiples of Guide… sometimes to a greater extent than the more popular DCs and Timelys.

Silver Age - The rumor mill continues to churn out the message "The Silver Age market is down and only healthy in a few geographical pockets". Yet, when I investigated this perception in depth, I found just the opposite to be true. Sure, there are slow SA titles, but they are the same titles that have always tended to be slow A few dealers are somehow "loaded down" with this material and I feel have come to the erroneous conc usion that the entire Silver market is off

Some support for my opinion. A $3,200 offer was made on a NM Incredible Hulk #1 (which Guides for $8,500) This would certainly support the claims of a SA downturn Yet that same book sold for $11,000! There's still interest out there.. strong interest!

Sales: Brave and the Bold #28 FR $200, #34 VF/NM $1,895, #57 NM $120; Flash #105 VF+ $2,400, #123 FN/VF $350, Hulk #6 GD+ $185, Hawkman #4 VF- $86, Silver Surfer #1 VF/NM $410, Our Army At War #151 FN+ $70; Amazing Spider-Man #14 NM $1,250, #7 GD $100, #1 FN+ $6,200; Amazing Fantasy #15 FN- $3,750, Fantastic Four #48 NM $1,485; I Spy #1 VF+ $95; and Dark Shadows #1 NM $165.

If one is looking for a long term investment, there are still a few places to get great Silver Age buys out there. One area that seems ripe is certain dealers who think they are "overstocked" with Silver books Another place to look are the collectors who are just itching to be players in Golden Age market and are trying to raise capital by quickly turning over their Silver Age material at very attractive prices.

Late forties, early fifties books - Pat Calhoun continues to do a splendid job each month, letting us know about obscure and interesting comics from this era. This has stimulated many collectors to ask "what other undiscovered post Golden Age/pre-Silver Age books are out there?".

Some savvy collectors zeroed in on these books two or more years ago because of their rarity and still relatively inexpensive prices. Some of the forward thinking collectors are now slowly releasing this great material into the market. That means some great finds can be found… including books with art by such notables as Frazetta, Kubert, Kamen, Baker, Kirby, etc..

Also the subject of heavy and ever escalating demand are all the more famous "good-girl art" books (e.g. Phantom Lady) and even the lesser known titles (e.g. Junior, etc.). You won't find anyone to debate the scarcity of this material… these books are just plain hard to find, .. and in grade… forget it!

Long considered the "void" between the GA and SA, collectors are finding great reward by taking a second look at books from this era

Bronze Age Books (1970s) - Looking for a cheap thrill? (Although not cheap for long) Dig through the new Overstreet Annual No, I mean REALLY dig through it and study it. Don't just stop looking when the prices drop below $10 In this $1 to $10 range are books containing the first appearances of the Human Target, Rose and Thorn, Grell's Green Arrow, the

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MARKET REPORTS

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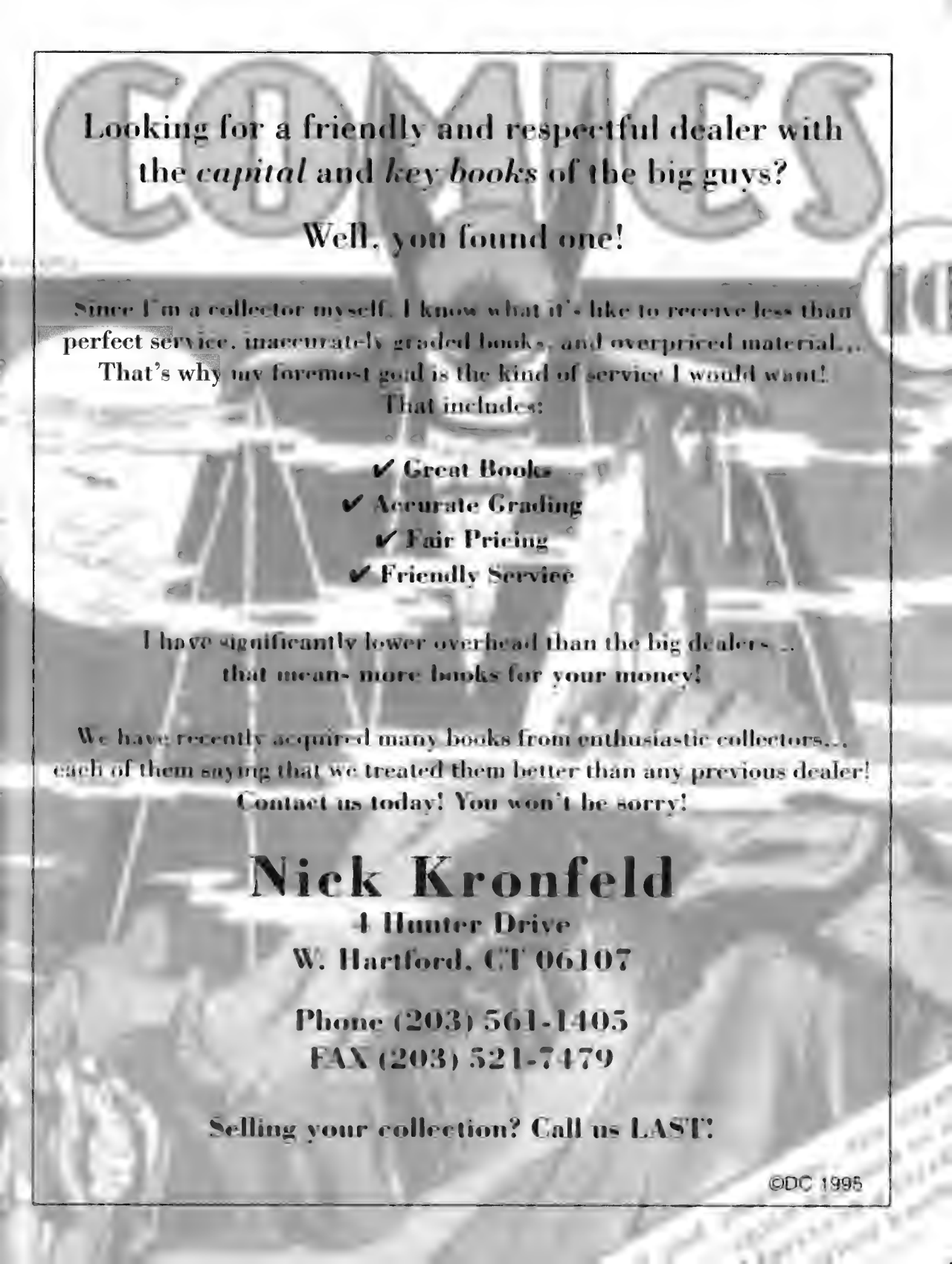
SHAY SHETH, & JOHN LEE
Continental Comics
Cherry Hill, New Jersey

On May 6, 1995 Continental Comics held their first comic book auction and it was a rousing success. The auction was conducted utilizing the CBG phone auction format that has proven to be a success over the past year. Timelys and DC were very popular, yet the true performers were the small esoteric publishers from the Golden Age. As you review the "prices realized" list that follows, please add the 5% buyers commission to arrive at the actual price paid by the winning bidder.

Action Comics #14 VG+ $800, #76 VG/FN $152; Adventure Comics #56 VG/FN $406; All Top Comics #12 FN- $125; Amazing Man #22 VG $248; Amazing Spider-Man #1 VG+ $1,430; Batman #11 VG $667, #12 FN++ $807; Blue Beetle #54 app F+ $330; Blue Beetle #49 VF- $330; Captain Aero #22 (Mile High copy) NM- $825; Captain America #78 VG- $418; Catman #26a (Mile High copy) NM- $990, #1 FN++ $805, #29 app VG $305; Challengers #1 & 2 GD/FN $150; Crime Reporter #2 FN/VF $484; Eagle Comics #1 & 2 FN/VF $275; Exciting Comics #62 VF+ $252; Fantastic Comics #1 GD $385; Fighting Yank #20 VF+ $275; Flash Comics #4 GD $394; If the Devil Would Talk NM- $350; Jungle Comics #87 VF+ $110; Lois Lane #1 FN- $440; Marvel Mystery #22 VG/FN $418; Military Comics #10 VG/FN $160; Monster Crime #1 FN/VF $400; More Fun #57 GD/VG $566; Mystic Comics #6 FN $932; Neal Adams original art (Detective cover 1968) $877; Phantom Lady #17 app VG- $932; Planet Comics #3 GD/VG $303; Porky Pig's Duck Hunt VF- $365; Power Comics #3 VF- $545; Science Comics #1 GD/GD+ $413; Silver Streak #1 VG/F $1,320, #7 app VG $1,210,; Slave Girl #2 FN- $152; Startling #49 VF/VF+ $1,600; Strange Adventures #9 FN+ $432; Strange Terrors #6 VG $330; Strange World's #3 FN- $275; Sunny Comics lot #12-14 VG+ $248; Superworld #1 app GD/VG $323; Suspense Comics #1 VG+ $1,540, #1 FR $301; Terrific Comics #5 app FN+ $3,100; Thrilling Comics #11 FN+ $163; Tomb of Terror (lot) VG/FN $138; True Crime #2 VG- $196; USA Comics #3 VG/FN $550; Weird Tales of the Future #5 VG $259; Wonder Comics #14 VF+ $805; Wonder Woman #105 VG $330.



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DEAN SCOVILLE
Comic Detective
Covina, California

As more debate is spurred regarding the genesis/evolution of recent characters, one might begin re-examining the origins of the old standbys. While "Atlas" pre-hero have enjoyed a renaissance during the past few years, I think paying particular attention to the so called prototype issues now is a good idea. If not, you may be paying more for them later. A big factor in this is the fact that Stan Lee has purportedly acknowledged that these issues were "tryouts" for characters who would later become the mainstays of the Marvel Universe. We may someday witness a convention panel discussing these issues, or better yet, ponder those other "tryout" characters who never reached stardom (might the Wommelly, Troll and Oog be examples?).

If we can imagine demand for the 1931 Superman prototype now, we might look back one day and realize the current bargains that may be found in these Atlas/Marvel "test" stories. For example take the Spider-Man "prototype" in JIM #73. Prototypes of Marvel Universe characters as diverse as Aunt May, The Hulk, and Professor X may be found in pre-hero editions of ST, TOS, TTA, and JIM. With some dramatic changes affecting our heroes of late, one might one day refer to FF #1, DD #1 and, yes, even AF #15, as "prototype issues". All this is food for prototypical" thought!

A sample from this month's sales: Flash #110 VF- 475; Namora the Sea Beauty #2 GD $85; Sea Devils #6 VF/NM $70, #9 VF/NM $70, #10 VF/NM $70; Showcase #23 VF/NM $950, #24 VF/NM $800, #10 FN+ $700, #36 VF/NM $450, #37 VF/NM $400, #33 VF/NM $300, #12 FN- $200, #49 FN+ $150; Superman #49 FN+ $150; World's Finest #5 VG $200, #6 GD+ $125, #44 FN $125, #24 VG $100.

GREG WHITE
Comic Books & Collectibles
Kissimmee, Florida

Golden Age As many are already aware, this is an active area. Most inquiries we receive target books that do not cross our path very often (number one issues, origin issues, special appearances etc.) even though we do maintain a large stock that ranges from the early 40s to the late 40s. (both popular and obscure titles). Timelys and special interest DC continue to lead the request pack. We also have had a demand for affordable Fawcett titles and westerns. Unfortunately, many of the most enjoyable characters from this period (Captain America, Batman, Spectre to list a few) are no longer within the price range of many collectors. Archive editions are fun but there is nothing like reading the real item! Our recent acquisitions have been few and include More Fun #59 and #76, Captain Marvel #2, and a small run of early 1950s books. Recent sales include Airboy Vol 3 #2 $35; Four Color #108 $175; Batman #27 $90; Comic Cavalcade #6 $295; and Archie Annual #1 $350.

Silver Age Always a busy area in our store and at conventions. High grade keys are in demand… so what else is new? Marvels (1961-64) and DCs (1955-61) lead the pack here with requests. Requests are also coming in for westerns and certain photo cover Dell and Gold Key. Recent purchases include two (2) copies of Amazing Fantasy #15 and two (2) copies each of Amazing Spider-Man #1-10, early Hulks, and a nice bunch of high grade DCs (1961-65). Stock remains strong on high grade Marvels and DCs from 1960-69. Recent sales: Amazing Spider-Man #6-9 $1,500 (the group); Journey into Mystery #93 VG $48; Jeep #2 VG $20; Mad Magazine #37-46 $140 (the group); Hulk #3 VF $1,100; Superman #91 VG $400; Showcase #6 FN $600; Flash #123 VG $200 and Star Trek #1 FN $150.

Artwork & Toys A smaller part of our business but an area that we try to maintain a reasonable selection in. No particular item stands out as being in great demand, yet a steady flow of requests enable this area of our store to remain active. Recent acquisitions include a large group of Disney animation artwork from the years 1945-53, Captain Action dolls and uniforms, and a selection of 1950's bubble gum cards. We also picked up two original Beatles movie one sheets from the 1960's. Recent sales: Lost in Space Aurora model kit $695; Captain Action doll complete $175; Captain Action Batman uniform $400; set of Davy Crockett gum cards $150; Song of the South cel (1940's) $695; Donald Duck animation drawing (1943) $200; Peanuts original art daily $900; Archie comic book cover art by Bill Vigoda (1940's) $2,500.

That wraps up our report for this issue. We hope everyone has a great summer. When you visit the Walt Disney World area please stop by and say hello and see you in San Diego!

JOHN SNYDER
Diamond International Galleries
Timonium, Maryland

This time around I thought I'd share some of the record prices premiums and comic related collectibles are realizing. Below are a sample of recent Gallery sales (about 75 or so) that are rather interesting. My take on the overall market is that it is continuing at a high level. This perspective is amplified by the fact that hardly a day goes by now without a record price being set.

"Man with Sword" Frazetta pewter statue $300; "Rich Finds at Inventory Time" PP#2 serigraph $2,500; "Terrors in the Jungle" L.B. Cole re-creation art $1,500; 1941 Superman club membership kit $150; Baba Looey (Hanna-Barbera) children's punch out book $175; Betty Boop wooden standee $32; Big Little Paint Book (1933) $1,000; Black Flame compass ring $250; Boy Chief police badge $35; Buck Rogers Rings-of-Saturn ring $850; Buster Brown Antics (Book) $470; Buster Brown Jolly Times (Book) $785; C.C.Beck cover re-creation (World's Finest Comics) $1,500; Schomburg cover re-creation (Cap. Am./USA #10) $15,000; Captain Hawks ring $150; Captain Marvel Jr. Statue $3,500; Captain Marvel statuette with box (1946) $3,000; Captain Marvel statuette, small, no box (1946) $2,000; Captain Midnight ring $100; Carl Barks "Always Another Rainbow" mini litho $350; Carl Barks "Gifts from Shacktown" mini litho $380; Carl Barks "Hot Defense" mini litho $380; Carl Barks "Pick and Shovel Laborer" mini litho $380; Dick Tracey Paint Book $750; Don Winslow Lt. Commander pin $1,500; Donald Duck camera $150; Flash Gordon paint

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HIGHEST QUALITY GOLDEN AGE
FOR SALE

All-American Comics #17 VF $5000
Moderate professional restoration

All-Star Comics #7 VG- $5500
Classic early JSA

All-Star Comics #12 GD $200

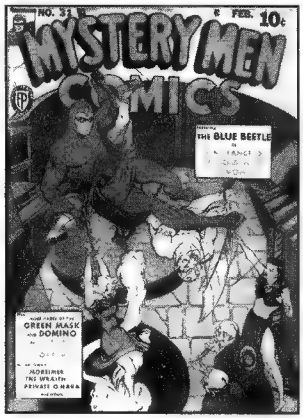
All-Star Comics #13 GD $200

All-Star Comics #15 VG- $375

All-Star Comics #22 VG $250

All-Star Comics #24 GD/VG $175

Batman #1 VF- $14000
Moderate restoration by Sarill



Batman #5 VG+ $900

Captain America Comics #59 VG+ $550
Origin issue

Detective Comics #38 VF- $9500
Moderate professional restoration

Detective Comics #50 FN- $600

More Fun Comics #11 VF $3900
Unbelievable - never found this nice

More Fun Comics #59 VG- $550
Classic Spectre cover

More Fun Comics #74 VG/FN $600

Mystery Men Comics #11 VG+ $150
Classic Fox

Mystery Men Comics #12 FN+ $250

Mystery Men Comics #31 FN- $140

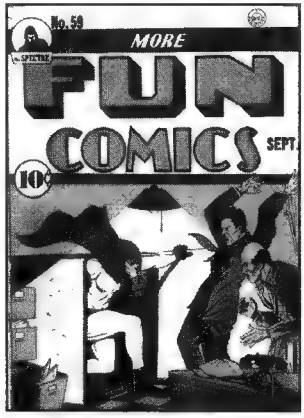
Phantom Lady #13 FN/VF $1400
Classic first issue

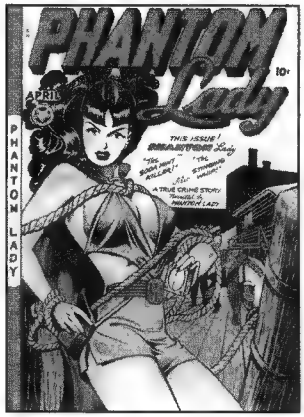
Phantom Lady #16 FN- $450

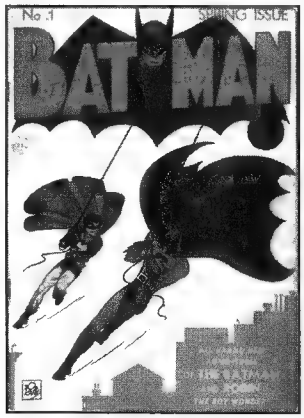
Phantom Lady #17 FN/VF $3500
Beautiful-the ultimate headlights cover

Phantom Lady #20 FN $400

World's Finest Comics #2 VG- $700







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SCHIFFMAN REPORT

continued from page 70

Living Mummy, the Scarecrow, etc.. Many dealers are more than happy to sell these to you "cheap." But snag them quickly because Bronze Age collectors all over the country are already paying multiples of Guide. (But heck, that can mean multiples of just a dollar or two!)

Sales: All Star Western #10 FN $80; Action #440 NM $12; Marvel Team-up #1 VF/NM $78; Jimmy Olsen #134 NM $44; World's Finest #215 VF/NM $8; Rima #7 NM $6; Special Marvel Edition #15 VF/NM $58; Dead of Night #11 VF/NM $7.50; and Weird Worlds #8 NM $5.

Original Art - Is there more Silver Age art out there than we are led to believe? Perhaps, but after a slight set-back, Silver Age art is back stronger than ever. When it first hit, collectors seemed astonished at just how much 1960s Kirby art still existed... but soon found out that the market was prepared to absorb it all. Collectors are also looking for convention sketches by their favorite artists, and dealers are reporting less and less availability of Frazetta sketches and re-creations by the more popular Golden Age artists.

A Prediction - Retailers are looking at ever shrinking profit margins... stores are closing in record numbers... dealers are operating on credit cards... some large distributors are closing their doors while others are consolidating... Marvel's new approach has caused distribution woes with many... sellers are routinely ignoring price guides and asking (and getting) astronomically high prices.

Plus there's infighting and **"overly enthusiastic competitive behavior"** (sorry, couldn't resist) among dealers and even collectors... and more and more hobbyists are moving exclusively to older material (especially Golden Age).

Whew... what a roller coaster ride of a market. I predict that the next six months are going to "tell the tale" about the future of collecting. I'll keep you posted, thanks for reading, and see you in the next CBM! ■

MARKET REPORTS

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SNYDER *continued from page 72*

book $750; G-Man gun with box $150; Tenggren painting "Gepetto's Store Front" $30,000; Graham Ingels Original Art (Haunt of Fear #11 cover) $12,000; Graham Ingels Art (Old Witch in Dungeon) $6,000; Huckleberry Hound Golden picture story book $185; Jiggs sirocco figurine $100; Joe Penner wind-up toy $225; Jungle Jim Sunday page (5/26/35) $12,000; L.B. Cole re-creation art (True Crime) $1,500.

Lassie Red Heart premium $157; Last original Schomburg painting (Timely Characters) $15,000; Li'l Abner & Daisey Mae candy machine $500; Lone Ranger "Ice Cream comic" giveaway (FN/VF) $4,000; Marx Brothers "Go West" one sheet movie poster $600; Mickey and Donald plates (set of two) $250; Mickey Mouse "The Band Leader" figure $450; Mickey Mouse Bibo & Lang book (VF) $8,500; Mighty Mouse doll $262; Mutt & Jeff 1910 $470; "New Adventures of Tarzan" pop-up book $450; Overstreet Price Guide #25 (leather bound) $100; Overstreet Premium Ring Guide #1 (leather bound) $100; Paul Gustavson original art $525; Phantom ring $104; Pluto wind-up toy $157; Popeye wind-up toy $275.

Red Ryder paint book $600; Red Ryder Victory Patrol kit with comic book $6,000; Robin Hood animation cel (Disney) $750; Secret Agent X-9 original watercolor $5,000; Sensation Comics #1 VF+ $27,000; Shadow bust ring (gold, #17) $395; Shadow bust ring (silver, #109) $80; Sheldon Moldoff cover re-creation (Flash #7) $2,000; S. Moldoff orig. art splash page (Hawkman & Hawkgirl) $1,000; Donald Duck bronze figurine (Sheriff of Bullet Valley, #194) $2,700; Snow White & 7 Dwarfs cel (Key set up & background, 1937) $125,000; Straight Arrow "face" ring $50; Superman flicker ring $200; Superman statue (Bowen designs) $200.

Tarzan coloring book #988 $1,000; Tom Mix paint book $315; Tom Mix ring $500; Tom Mix Straight Shooter ring $100; Tom Mix Straight Shooter ring (variation) $250; Top Cat children's punch-out (Hanna Barbera, 1962) $185; Uncle Scrooge book "The Lemonade King" (Western File copy) $350; Wonder Woman #1 VF $15,000; X-Men ring ("Xavier Institute Class of '94 Grad", pewter) $50.

JIM PAYETTE
Rare Books & Comics
Bethlehem, New Hampshire

The following is a report that focuses on a collection of books that Robert Rogovin (Four Color Comics) and I recently purchased in the Rochester, New York area. In most cases, the sale price for each book is followed by a parentheses which shows a percentage that compares the sale price with the 1995 Guide value. Any % can easily be translated to a multiple of Guide. For instance 134% means 1.34 times Guide; 211% means 2.11 times Guide; 320% means 3.20 times Guide; etc. At the request of the CBM editor, I've included every book in the collection, sold or not. Please note that the term "$NS" indicates those books that were not sold at the time this report was turned in to CBM.

Action #31 FR/GD $110 (116%), #32 FR $100 (118%), #34 VG $NS, #35 VG/FN $400 (160%), #36 GD $160 (168%), #38 VG/FN $450 (180%), #40 VF $850 (183%), #41 FN/VF $NS, #42 VF+ $1,600 (194%), #43 VF $NS, #44 FN $400 (154%); Adventure #56 FR/GD $NS, #57 FN/VF $800 (152%), #58 FN $650 (186%), #61 FN $4,000 (167%), #62 VF+ $1,200 (200%), #63 VG/FN $600 (185%), #64 VF $1,050 (175%), #65 VF $1,600 (267%), #66 FN- $950 (211%), #67 VF+ $1,700, #68 VF $750 (136%); All American #20 VG $965, #22 VG $NS, #24 VG+ $NS, #26 VF/NM $NS, #27 VF $NS, #28 VF/NM $NS, #29 FN/VF $NS, #30 FN $NS, #32 VF/NM $NS, #33 FN+ $NS; All Flash #1 VF/NM $13,000 (186%), #2 VF $900 (97%), #3 VF $400 (107%); All Star #1 FN $NS, #3 VG $6,500 (108%), #6 VF $NS, #7 VF/NM $4,400 (200%), #8 VF/NM $26,500 (331%);

Batman #3 About FN $NS, #4 GD+ $NS, #5 VF/NM $7,000 (250%), #6 FN $NS, #8 About FN $NS; Big Three #3 VG/FN $NS; Crackajack Funnies #29 About FN $NS; Detective #46 VG+ $NS, #47 GD+ $NS, #48 FN/VF $975 (150%), #50 VF $NS, #51 GD+ $NS, #53 VF/NM $1,800 (225%), #54 VF $1,000 (174%), #55 VG+ $NS, #56 VG $NS, #57 VF $900 (180%); Exciting #7 VG+ $100 (154%); Famous Funnies #75 VG $NS; Flash #18 VG- $NS, #19 VF- $1,025 (171%), #20 FN $550 (138%), #21 VF $1,875 (326%), #22 VF+ $1,875 (250%), #23 VF- $1,875 (395%), #24 VF/NM $2,400 (240%), #25 VF+ $1,500 (250%); Green Lantern #1 VG/FN $NS;

More Fun #65 VG- $900 (200%), #66 VG+

GREG PHARIS & DAVE GRISEZ
San Diego Comics and Collectibles
San Diego, California

Welcome to the San Diego Comics and Collectibles toy merchandising and collectible market report for this month. Although comic books will always be the prime supporter of this store, many collectors and readers have diversified into the expanding (but still in its infancy) toy market.

SDC&C's primary focus is with the older toy and comic book material. And like comics, certain toys provide that feeling of nostalgia which clicks in only when just the right one from our youth winds its way into our collections.

Recent sales of comic related items include: Superman pocket knife (circa 1950s) $22.50; Mego Spider-Man on blister card $600; Marvel hand puppets featuring Hulk, Thor, and Spidey $15 each; Buddy-L Spider bike $5; Spidey Halloween Head $9; Mego Aquaman (boxed) $80; Corgi Bat-Boat $600; Wonder Woman watch (70's) $25.

Disney toy sales include: Mickey picture puzzle cubes from West Germany (mid 1960's) $20; Uncle Scrooge glass (1977) $12; Disney greeting cards (1960's) $12; Snow White ceramic (Japanese early 1960s) $35; Donald Duck Big Little books VG $20 each.

Other character collectible sales include: Snoopy astronaut $20; Snoopy on snow sled (Avon) 1969 $18; Mego Star Trek figures, loose includes the Bridge $150 for all. Romulan Mego figure (This figure might be Spock—or maybe not, no one has told me with 100% certainty) This flew off the shelf in less than a week for $150!

Star Wars remains hot for us with carded figures being a definite winner. We even sell the empty figure cards for $2 each! This market has been steady even with the current over saturation of new merchandise virtually flooding toy shop aisles. Glub! Glub!

Six million Dollar Man has a definite following as well. Mint in Mint box Steve and Maskatron sold as a set for $2000. Unopened Steve puzzle $25. If priced fairly, this TV cult phenomenon is an easy sell. And if we had them, we could sell Micronauts all day long here. Do these exist anywhere? Thanks for reading and see you next time.

$NS, #67 VF $NS, #69 VF/NM $2,400 (200%), #70 VF+ $2,000 (167%), #71 VG/FN $NS, #72 VG $NS, #73 FN+ $9,300 (293%), #74 VF+ $2,000 (167%), #75 VF/NM $2,000 (182%); NY World's Fair #1940 GD+ $NS; Samson #1 GD/VG $NS; Sensation #1 VF $19,000 (325%); Shadow #6 VG+ $NS; Super Comics #30 VG $NS; Superman #8 GD/VG $NS, #9 VG+ $NS, #10 VG $NS, #12 VF+ $1,200 (114%), #13 FN/VF $NS, #14 VF $NS; Tip Top #54 GD/VG $NS; True Comics #1 VF $NS; World's Finest #2 VF $NS, #3 VF+ $NS, #4 VF+ $NS.

Beyond just this collection, my catalog sales indicate that the overall market seems quite healthy, and (like everyone else) I can report a continuing "boom" in Golden Age material. As for Silver Age, with a few exceptions, extremely high grade Silver sells very well at 1.5 x Guide, and keys 2 x Guide.

I feel (as do many) that spreads should be expanded. In other collectibles areas, the distance between Good and Mint can be 100 times. Sales in the comic book market support this change in pricing strategies. Let me say once again that I feel that price spreads need to expand tremendously to accurately reflect the market. Thanks for reading.

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and I feel pretty confident that an arrival date precludes a NM grade. However, let me say that many seasoned and highly skilled graders share your viewpoint, not mine. Since there is no absolute or universal grading standard (and may never be) your opinion is absolutely valid.

Best Article I've Read

I've just read #22 of your new magazine and it is great. "Shaping Our Lives With Comics" was the best article I've read about comic books in a long time. All my life people have put down comic books and said that they were stupid and meaningless. All the years that I have been reading comic books, comic books have been the victim of destructive criticism by teachers, parents, and the media who haven't read comic books since childhood. Kent Martin's article proved that comic books can help us understand ourselves and about life. Thank you and welcome back.

Michael Leon, New York

Robert Bell Who?

Wow! I exclaimed upon walking in the door of my local comic book store and seeing the latest issue of Comic Book Marketplace. Being unexpected increased my joy. (Ain't it strange the things that make us happy these days!?) Anyway, it was a great issue I've been saving little tid-bits about old comics and stuff since you went away and now I have a place to send them. Incidentally, my dealer only had three copies left and now he has none. (After I left, natch!).

(1) Does Anybody Know? I believe it was a Ditko story. In it, the world is going to collide with something in space and of course, the end of the world will ensue. The answer is to build enough very large spaceships and remove everyone to somewhere. The denouement is: just as the Earth is about to collide with this "thing", we see the rockets blasting off...just as the "Earth"...hits the catchers mitt. Strike one! a voice yells. Help!

(2)Does anyone remember Robert Bell? In the mid to late 60's, Bob had his store on 45th Street in Woodside, Queens, New York. There were no new comics of course so you had to "settle" for bins and bins of Golden Age comics—in the bins, under the bins, on the floor, on shelves, etc. Almost every Saturday I would either drive or take the train in and drop as much as $40-$50 dollars. It was an amazing place and as I remember most old comics were $2-$3 dollars each. I distinctly remember riding home on the Long Island Railroad with my stack on my lap. I can still remember the smell of "Ye Old Victory Book Shop."

Bob Bell also, of course had Marvel comics, which he personally was very hot for. I could have cared less. To me, Marvel was Charlton and like all that cheap stuff. It was Bob who got me hooked on Marvel and I had actually never read one until I met him. Anyway, one day in 1968, I walked in on a Saturday as usual and Bob took me to one side. "Don," he said, "I'm looking to sell the store, lock stock and barrel, inventory and everything...except my Marvels, those I want to keep."

Nervously I asked him how much? "Four thousand dollars and it's all yours," he replied. I looked around. Keep in mind besides a ton of Golden and Silver Age books there were cards, toys, magazines and I think a warehouse in the back or up in Yonkers where he lived.

Right around that time I had come into almost three thousand dollars. Man! I guess I don't need to tell you what happened but I was 21 years old, in love, and getting that extra one thousand dollars seemed an insurmountable problem. I thought it over for few days but decided not to buy. At 21, I guess I figured the world was my "Erster" and that three grand was going to make me a BMOC. Yeah. Right. Well, "Cie la Vie." As it turned out, about a year later I sold my comics to Bob and didn't buy another one until 1984. I spoke to Bob in 1984 and bought a Sgt. Fury #1 from him and have been a comic book addict (again) since. Thanks Bob.

Anyway, it's good to have CBM back on the stands and "Pleeze" no more juggling!

Don Cook, New York

New Fun

First of all, it's great to have you back. I'll look forward to reading CBM each month. One thing that I would like to see is an article on the DC title: New Fun. I know there were only six issues before the name changed to "More Fun" and I do see at least a mention of

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the second title from time to time. In fact in CBM #22 Matt Schiffman says in his market report: "these highly prized issues (More Fun) are leading the way in collector interest and setting record prices with nearly every sale."

Have any copies of "New Fun" changed hands recently? I can only assume there is little information on the title, because there are so few issues left and these are seldom sold or traded. I have a copy of New Fun #6 and I would like to know more about it's rarity and value. The 24th Edition of the Overstreet Price Guide says: as few as ten copies may exist and lists a value of $1360 in GD25 condition, $4100 in FN65 and $7500 in VF82. I have read that very scarce issues sometimes bring multiples of the guide price. Any information that you could provide would be a great help. I am enclosing a few pictures, it is complete and going by Overstreet's grading rules I would call it Good… it does have some tape repairs, as you can see in the snap shots. Thanks in advance for any help you can give me and long live the "New" CBM.

Roger Taylor, West Virginia

(1) An article on New Fun is in the works. (2) We are expanding our Marketplace reporting network so that if and when these rare items do change hands we can report on it. (3) Based on the pictures, it seems your estimate of grade is correct. At this writing, I estimate its present collector value to be in the $3,000 range (give or take a few hundred dollars). (4) The newest Overstreet (#25) lists New Fun #6 at $1,583 in GD, $4,750 in FN, and $9,500 in VF. I do know of two confirmed sales of NF #6 during the last year (there may be more). An unrestored GD minus copy sold for $3,000 plus shipping and an apparent FN (moderate restoration) sold for $4,200 plus $450 in trade. I personally have never seen an unrestored copy that was better than FN and until I do I will continue to suggest that a truly VF copy does not exist. (5) Some interesting info about NF #6 can be read in the article "DC Before Superman" in annual Price Guide #13 (1983). Thanks for writing, Roger!

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Amaz. Spid. #50 VG+ $110
Amaz. Spid. #96 F- $36
Amaz. Spid. #121 VF- $70
Ama. Spid. #129 VF+ $235
Amaz. Spid. #135 F+ $42
Amaz. Spid. #149 F+ $75
Amaz. Spid. #252 NM $28
Giant-Size Spid. #4 NM $40
Avengers. #1 VG+ $450
Avengers #2 G+ $115
Avengers #7 VG/F $90
Avengers #8 F- $75
Avengers #24 NM $30
Capt. Amer. #100 VF+ $275
Capt. Amer. #100 VF $245
Captain America #101 F+ $65
Capt. Am. #241 VF $45
Capt. Am. Ann #8 NM $40
Conan #1 F/VF $125
Conan #3 VG+ $65
Daredevil #4 F- $60
Daredevil #5 VF- $120
Daredevil #7 F+ $85
Daredevil #11 F $36
Daredevil #158 VF+ $45
Dr. Strange #171 VF/NM $25
Fant. Four #7 G $100
Fant. Four #9 F- $165
Fant. Four #19 VG- $60
Fant. Four #27 F+ $60
Fant. Four #48 G $95
Fant. Four #48 F- $245
Fant. Four #50 F+ $120
Fant. Four #50 F- $90
Incred. Hulk #182 NM $50
Iron Man & Sub. #1 F $75
Marvel Team-up #3 VF+ $40
New Mutants #87 NM $40
Silver Surfer #1 F- $125
Spect. Spid. #1 VF- $35
Strange Tales #103 VG+ $48
Strange Tales #105 F- $72
Strange Tales #108 VG+ $44
Strange Tales #148 VF+ $40
Strange Tales #179 VF+ $25
T. o. S. #40 VG/F $325
T. of Susp. #61 VF/NM $50
Tales to Ast. #89 NM $32
Tales to Ast. #101 VG/F $25
Thor #149 NM- $26
Werewolf by Night #2 VF+ $26
Werewolf by Night #32 NM $50
Werewolf by Night #2 NM- $25
X-Men #18 F+ $35
X-Men #19 VF $45
X-Men #26 VF $45
Uncanny X-Men #96 NM $45
Uncanny X-Men #213 M $27
Un. X-Men #248 VF/NM $24
Un. X-Men #268 VF/NM $22
DC
Action #267 F+ $180
Adventure #264 F $34
Adventure #271 VG $57
Adventure #282 VG/F $50
Aquaman #2 F- $65
Aquaman #3 F- $45
Batman #120 VG+ $90
Batman #129 VG $70
Batman #186 VF/NM $25
Batman #187 VF $32
Batman #200 VF $95
BatmanAnn. #3 VG $65
BatmanAnn. #7 F+ $17
Brave/Bold #29 VG/F $500
Brave/Bold #30 F/VF $750
Brave o/i Bold #42 F $140
Brave o/i Bold #93 VF $25
Creeper #1 VF/NM $32
Doom Patrol #121VF $60
80 pg. Giant #3 F $50
80 pg. Giant #6 F- $45
Flash #129 G $35
Flash #137 VG+ $140
Flash #160 F+ $30
Green Lantern #11 VG $55
Green Lantern #29 F+ $45
Green Lantern #64 NM $20
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Korkis & Marston

I was thrilled to read Jim Korkis' recent article on Wonder Woman's father in the May edition of Comic Book Marketplace. It was an excellent and informative piece. I say thrilled because for the last year or so, William Moulton Marston's career has been a major focus of my research.

He certainly had an astonishing life, and it is great to see him brought to the attention of comic fans at last. I knew Marston was the resident Family Circle psychologist, but I have not yet been able to systematically search through the magazine for his articles.

I do have a piece about ESP though, called 'Has this ever happened to you?' which is also by Olive Richard (I find the name a little curious, given that two of his children were called Olive Anne and Donn Richard. Coincidence, perhaps.)

I don't know of anything else by Marston on the comics other than his article 'Why 100,000,000 Americans Read Comics' (The American Scholar, 1944, Vol. 13) which you quote from.

I'm afraid I'm new to the comic scene, and thus I don't know much about scholarship in the area. Although I've seen the Gloria Steinem collection of some early Wonder Woman stories, I would dearly like to see more.

Incidentally, regarding the Wonder Woman with the Lie Detector on the cover… in 'story "The Girl with the Gun', Diana Prince gives "Jane" (Marva Psycho) a lie detector test. Unconvinced of the result, she decides to use the golden lasso to find out the truth instead!

Geoff Bunn, Ontario, Canada

Thanks for your excellent letter Geoff, and good luck with your research… and thanks to everyone who wrote in this issue. Please note that CBM reserves the right to edit letters selected for publication for length and/or content. If you'd care to write, send your cards and letters to:

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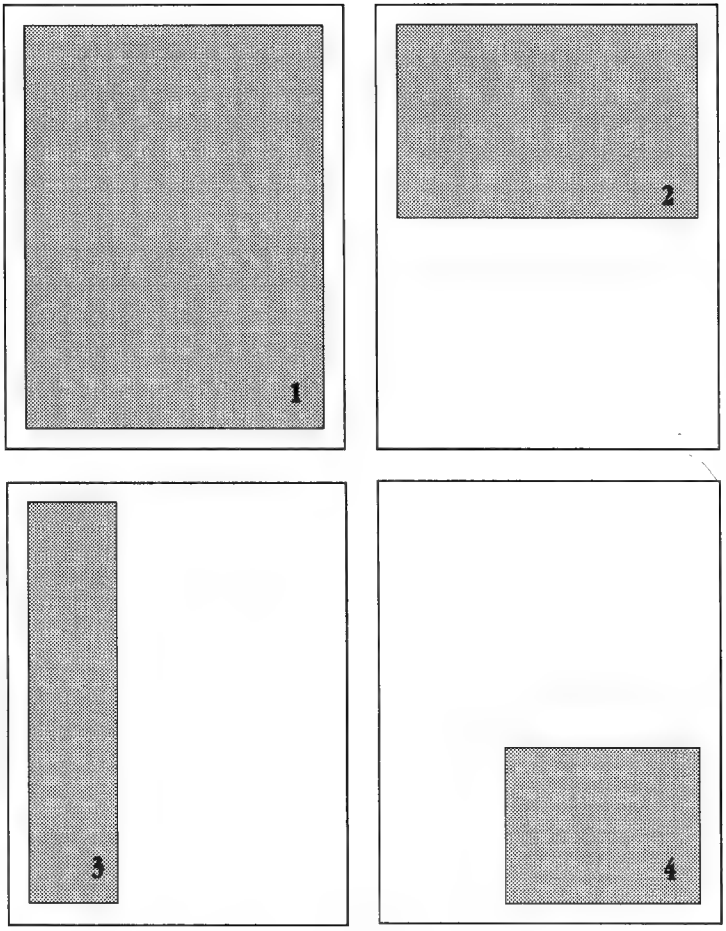

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Silver Print Rediscovered!

Recently discovered in the collection of Edwin and Rose Eisenberg was the original hand-colored "Silver Print Proof" of the cover of *Action Comics* #1... plus the "printer's proofs" of the covers to *Action Comics* #7 and #9. The story of the Silver Print and its owner adds another piece to the puzzle of comic book history.

Comic pioneer Ed Eisenberg is seventy-eight years young today. Back In 1937 (at the age of twenty-one) he was hired by Strauss Engraving Company (also known as Photocrome) in New York City. At Strauss, Ed worked as a color separator and "Ben-Day" man.

In the early days of comic book production, the task of choosing colors for the comics (and preparing the color separations for the printer) was a responsibility of the engraver, not the publisher, (unlike later eras). In 1937, Strauss was providing all the coloring and color separations for DC Comics in New York.

Sometime in the Spring of 1938, Ed Eisenberg hand-colored a black and white Silver Print proof copy of the cover to *Action Comics* #1. Although its name suggests something expensive, a Silver Print was nothing more than a cheap and quick method employed by the engraver to make a "positive" copy of an image that was going to be printed.

©DC

During this time period of comic book publishing, Silver Prints would usually be reduced to the actual size of the comic (approx. 10 7/8 inches by 7 3/4 inches). Silver Print paper has a porous and "flat" surface which allowed the colorist to easily apply colored inks or watercolors. These inked and painted "color guides" were used to determine what the final color scheme would be. Sometimes three or four different Silver Prints might be colored in order to select the best color combinations before the final printing took place.

Hand-colored Silver Prints were sent to the publisher for approval, before the comic was printed. After serving their purpose, they were almost always discarded.

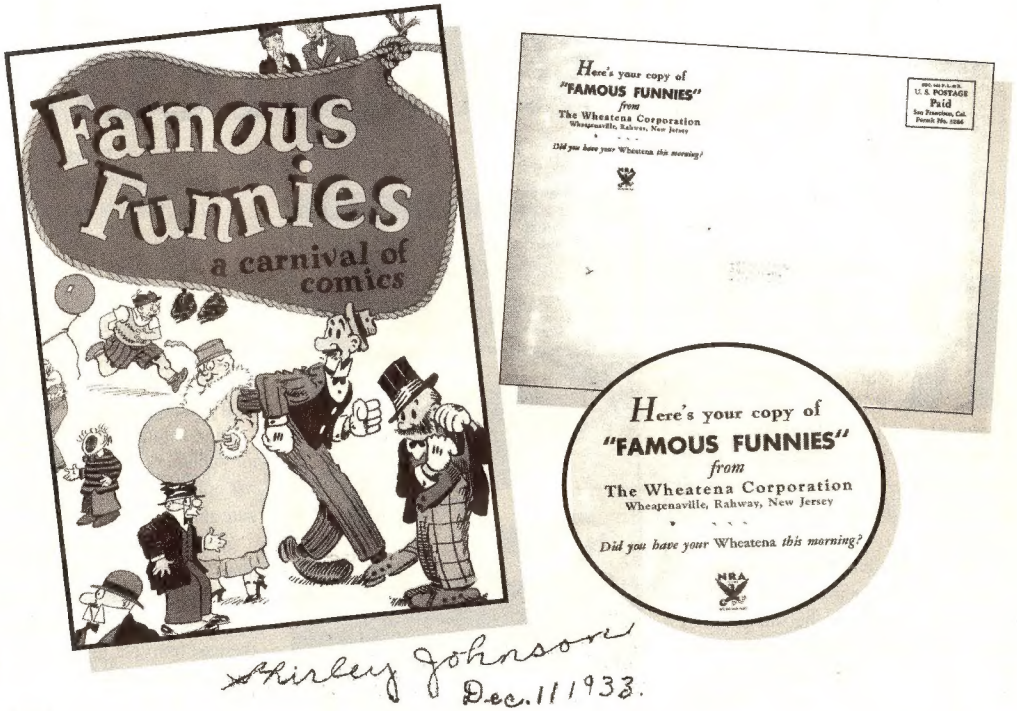
Although there are some differences easily noted between the Silver Print and the the printed cover of *Action* #1, the most obvious difference is the color of the car. It was changed from red in the print to green in the final printed cover.

Ed Eisenberg remembers someone determining "at the last minute" that the car's red color would reduce the impact of the red in Superman's red cape. Last minute changes were made, and *Action* #1 came out as we know it today... with a green car! The red car on the Silver Print was all but forgotten, until the rediscovery of this historic piece.

Ed Eisenberg has consigned all three pieces to Sotheby's New York, where they will be auctioned off June 17th. The estimated value of the three? Between five and ten thousand dollars! ■

BY ROGER HILL

Shirley's Copy *of* Famous Funnies



Contributed by Mark Wilson

For many years collectors and historians have pondered the background on *Famous Funnies* and its place in comic book history. Recently I discovered something that will add a little more to our knowledge of this enigmatic collectible. Not only did a copy come my way with a verifiable provenance back to the original owner, but it also confirmed what many have conjectured for years... namely that the original distribution of *Famous Funnies* included its use as a mail away premium! The copy shown here has an original mailing envelope that traces it to the Wheatena company.

But the most exciting part is the pencil signature (which someone attempted to erase) and the date. This finally provides historians with tangible evidence of a confirmable date! While this does not establish exact date of issue, it at least tells us with certainty that this comic was sold up until December of 1933.

The owner passed away in 1989 and this item was among the personal effects left to relatives. She had a few other comic books (including a subscription copy of *Walt Disney's Comics & Stories* #4) with her name written on them as well.

Also I estimate that it would take six to eight weeks to receive the book after she sent in for it. This would date the book at least as early as October of 1933. ■

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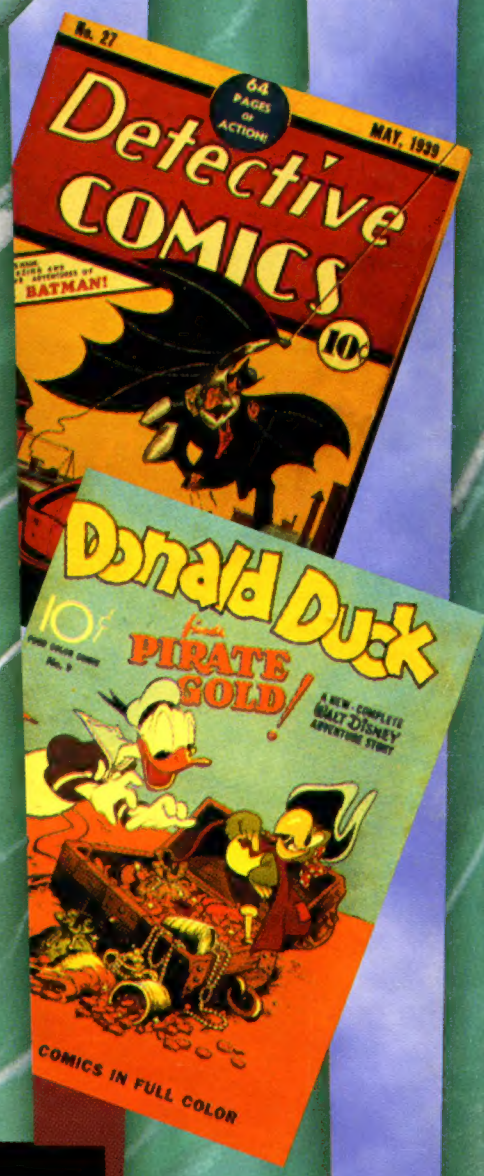

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